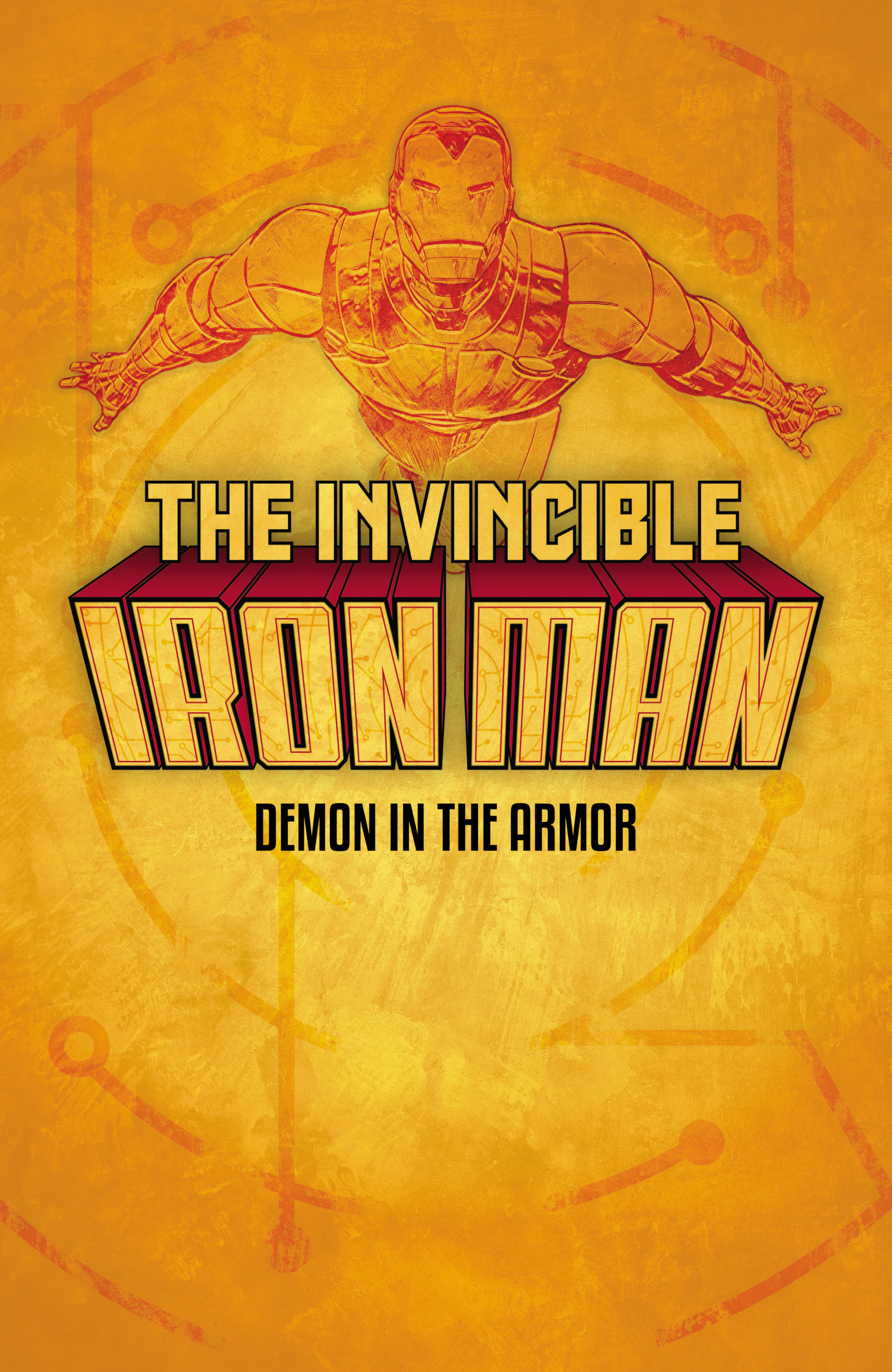
DUGGAN
FRIGERI
DI VITO
VALENZA

THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN

"The story is a fresh take on the beloved Avenger while staying true to his roots."
— ComicBook.com

DEMON IN THE ARMOR

MARVEL


THE INVINCIBLE
IRON MAN
DEMON IN THE ARMOR

WHEN MULTIBILLIONAIRE INDUSTRIALIST TONY STARK, INVENTOR EXTRAORDINAIRE, DONS HIS SOLAR-CHARGED, STEEL-MESH ARMOR, HE BECOMES A HIGH-TECH WARRIOR—THE WORLD'S GREATEST HUMAN FIGHTING MACHINE!

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS...

THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN

DEMON IN THE ARMOR

GERRY DUGGAN
WRITER

JUAN FRIGERI (#1-5) & ANDREA DI VITO (#6)
ARTISTS

BRYAN VALENZA
COLORIST

VC's JOE CARAMAGNA
LETTERER

KAEL NGU
COVER ARTIST

KAT GREGOROWICZ
ASSISTANT EDITOR

DARREN SHAN
EDITOR

TOM BREVOORT
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

IRON MAN CREATED BY STAN LEE, LARRY LIEBER, DON HECK & JACK KIRBY

JENNIFER GRÜNWALD
COLLECTION EDITOR

DANIEL KIRCHHOFFER
ASSISTANT EDITOR

LISA MONTALBANO
ASSOCIATE MANAGER, TALENT RELATIONS

JEFF YOUNGQUIST
VP PRODUCTION & SPECIAL PROJECTS

DAVID GABRIEL
SVP PRINT, SALES & MARKETING

ADAM DEL RE
BOOK DESIGNER

JAY BOWEN
LEAD DESIGNER

TIM SMITH 3
SR. MANAGER, DIGITAL

MEGHAN O'LEARY & RACHEL YOUNG
DIGITAL PRODUCTION

C.B. CEBULSKI
EDITOR IN CHIEF

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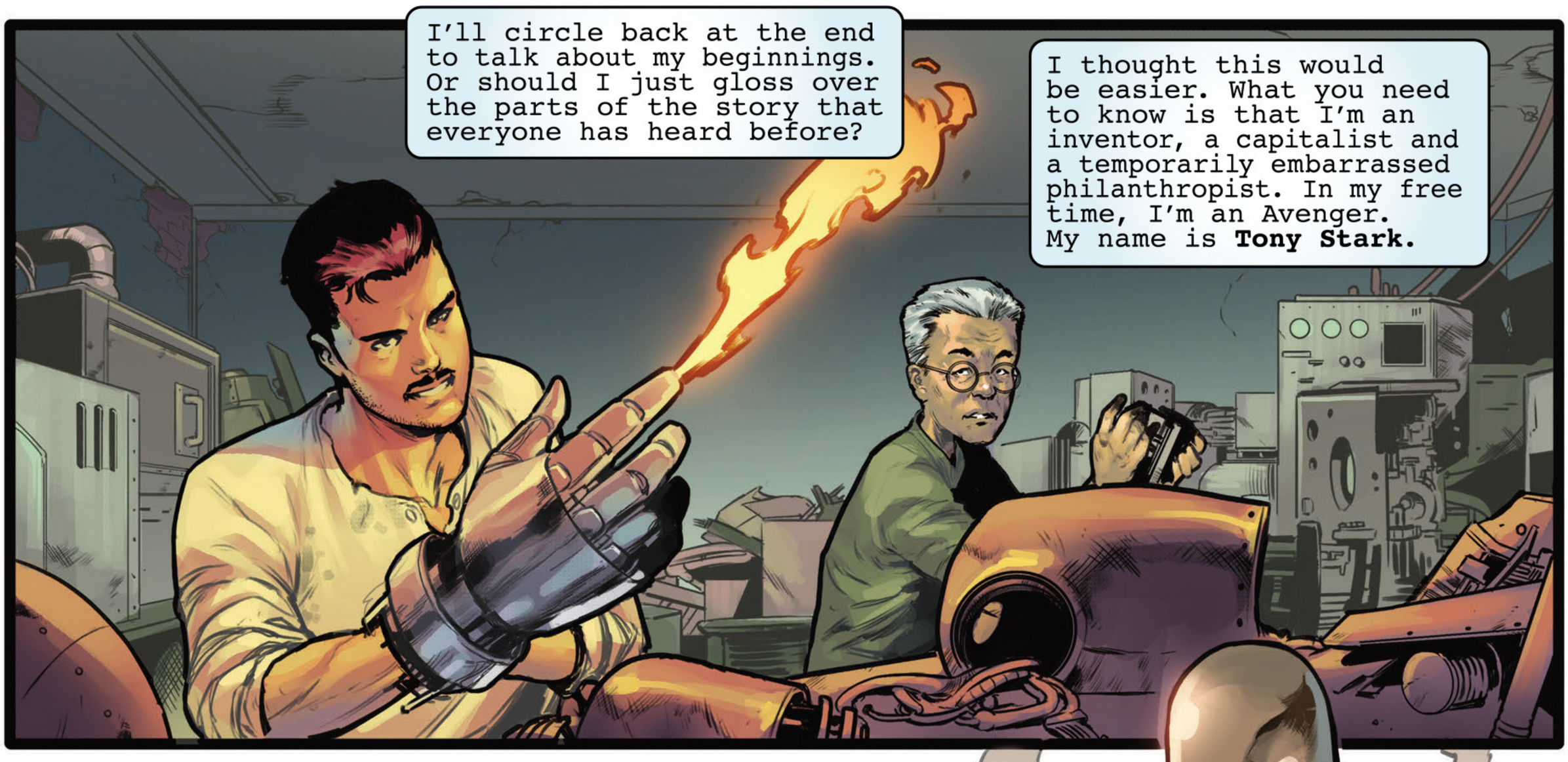
ONE

Stop me if you've heard this one. A man walks out of a cave and...
UGH.
Delete.


I'll circle back at the end to talk about my beginnings. Or should I just gloss over the parts of the story that everyone has heard before?
I thought this would be easier. What you need to know is that I'm an inventor, a capitalist and a temporarily embarrassed philanthropist. In my free time, I'm an Avenger. My name is **Tony Stark.**

I am also **Iron Man.**
DANGER!
AMMO

My father, Howard Stark, was a man of some wisdom. He used to say, "The good times are never as good as they seem, and the bad times are never as low."
He was right. Look at those *haircuts*.

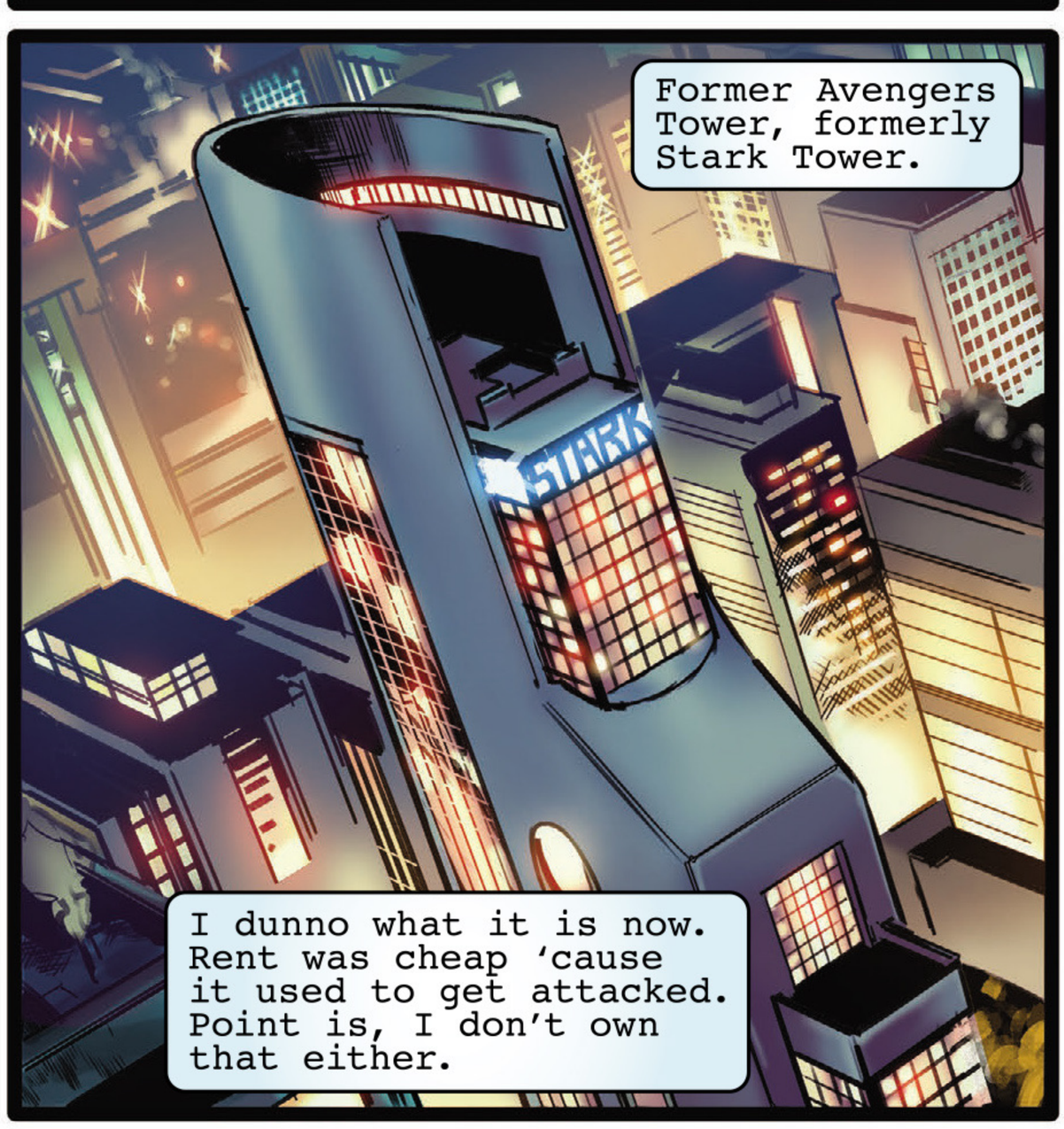
Before Apple, Microsoft, Feilong Industries and all the rest that would try to follow me, **Stark Industries** was the richest company in the world...

...and I, one of its richest men. In ones and zeroes **and** firepower.
The Iron Man armor was the embodiment of it all.

I'll do a deeper dive later on, but for those who don't know, I was never one for **moderation.** I drank for a lot of reasons.
Boredom, chief among them. Doing what I do...making new things... the act of creation means you need to spend so much of your life **alone.**

I've lived all around this world and off of it.
Before this place was called "Avengers Mansion," it was just the "Stark Residence." Don't own it anymore.
I think it's **still** an Avengers-themed hotel? Can that be right? B.O.S.S., make a note to fact-check that. If I had the money...

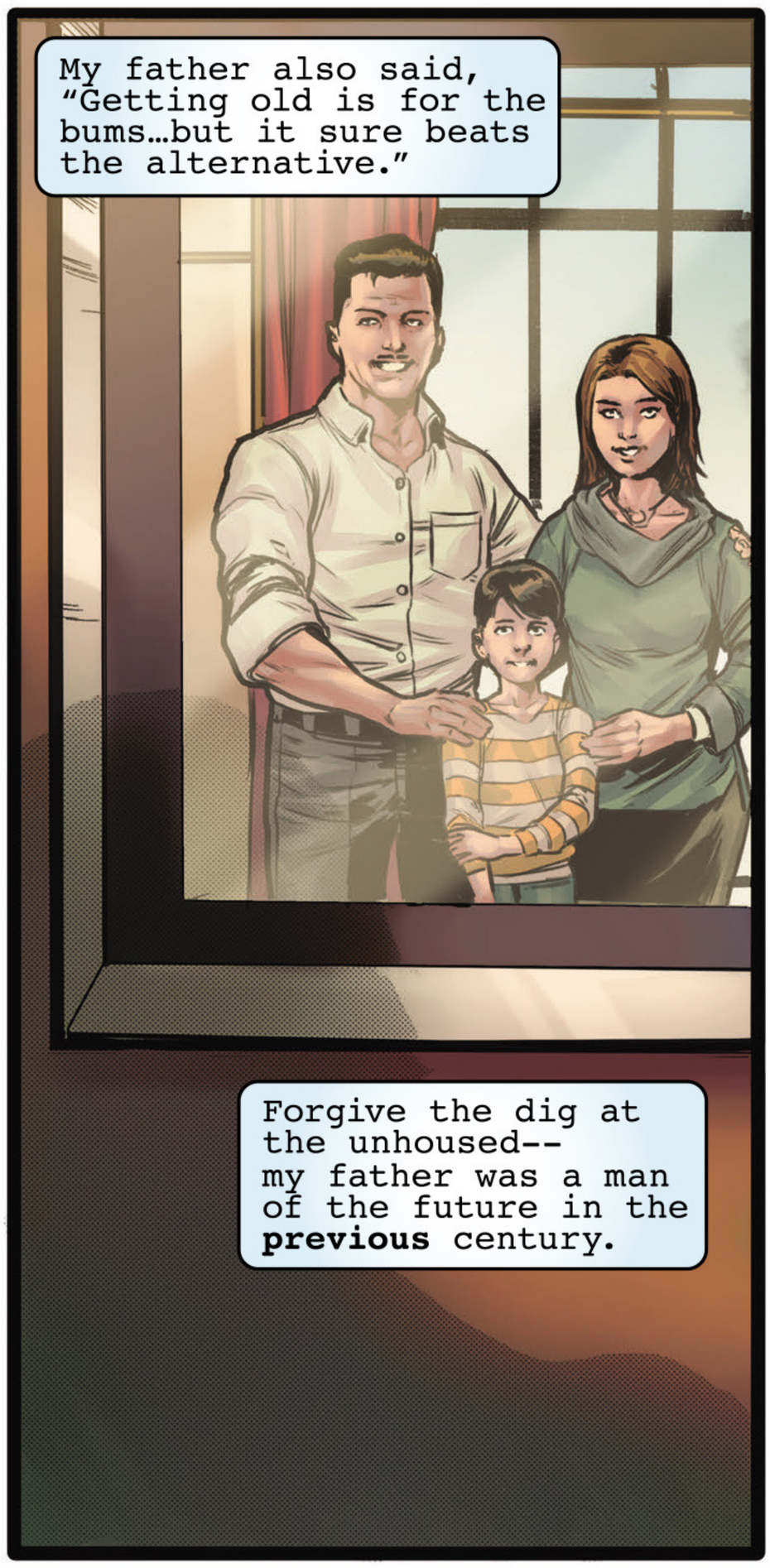
Used to own the largest plot in Malibu. Berserker 7 tore it down, I think?
Anyway, don't own that pad anymore either.


Former Avengers Tower, formerly Stark Tower.
STARK
I dunno what it is now. Rent was cheap 'cause it used to get attacked. Point is, I don't own that either.

I'm not gonna publish the exact address, for obvious reasons, but I **do** still own a little piece of New York property. She may not look like much, but she's got it where it counts.
Eh. Delete that. I don't want to reference any previous pop culture. I want this to be timeless.

The company with my name on it? Or symbol, I guess?
Don't own that. Not anymore.

Iron Man is still an Avenger. I'll tell you my greatest untold tales. From **both coasts.**
I **do** get to keep the bruises. That's about all.


My father also said, "Getting old is for the bums…but it sure beats the alternative."
Forgive the dig at the unhoused-- my father was a man of the future in the **previous** century.

I'm feeling my age these days. I swear I used to be cool.
Throw your hands in the air if **your** name has been rhymed in the same song with the deutsche mark and a great white shark.

Yes, I'm really good at making stuff--especially my own fun.

As I've gotten older, my idea of fun has changed.
Now I get my kicks finding out what my friends are doing in their labs.
These days, nothing brings me greater joy than listening to **Riri Williams** and her galaxy brain.

I mentioned I'm not quite the man I was. Well, **financially** anyway.
REAL WORLD
BROKEN
Tony Stark: The real reasons for the fall of the Stark's empire
I'm sure you want to know: Where did all my money go?

I spent my vast fortune buying up incredibly dangerous weapons of mass destruction, and it's my most precious secret. By the time this story is told, I'll have sorted it out.

Somehow.

The horde's in a **very** secure undisclosed location. I would never tell you. Only my best friend, **Rhodey**, knows where to find it.

Let's hope the many guns on the mantle in this story don't actually get taken down and fired later, 'cause that would probably mean the world is ending.

Seriously. Even the Stilt-Man's stilts are in there.

I'm not one for parties anymore, but I did attend the recent Hellfire Gala to tell **Emma Frost** that the human world would push back against their mutant resurrection technology.

DON'T YOU HAVE A MARTIAN ROCK TO GO SIT ON, *FEILONG?*

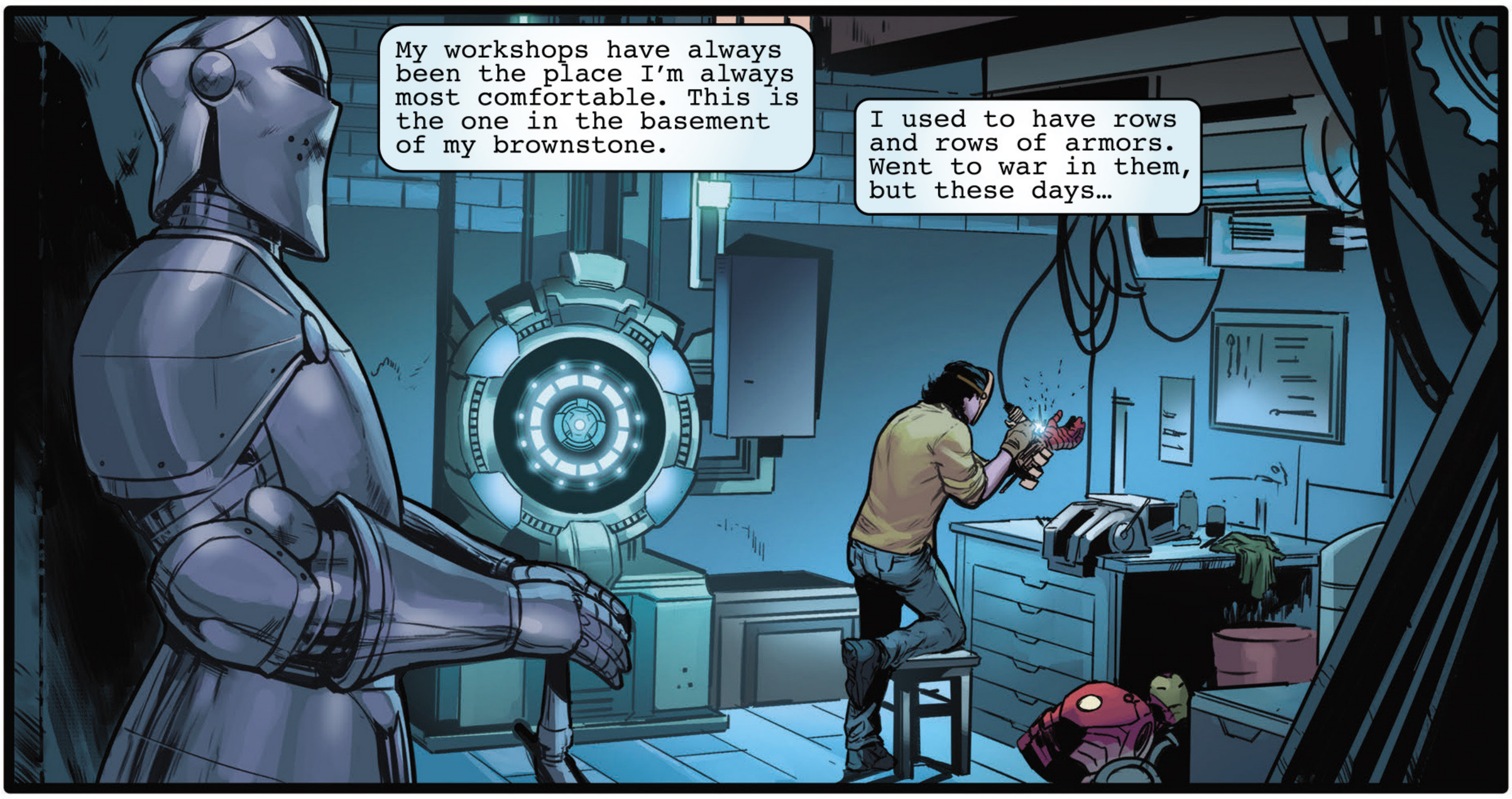
I HAVE ONE FOOT ON EARTH AND ONE ON MARS--

ARAKKO.

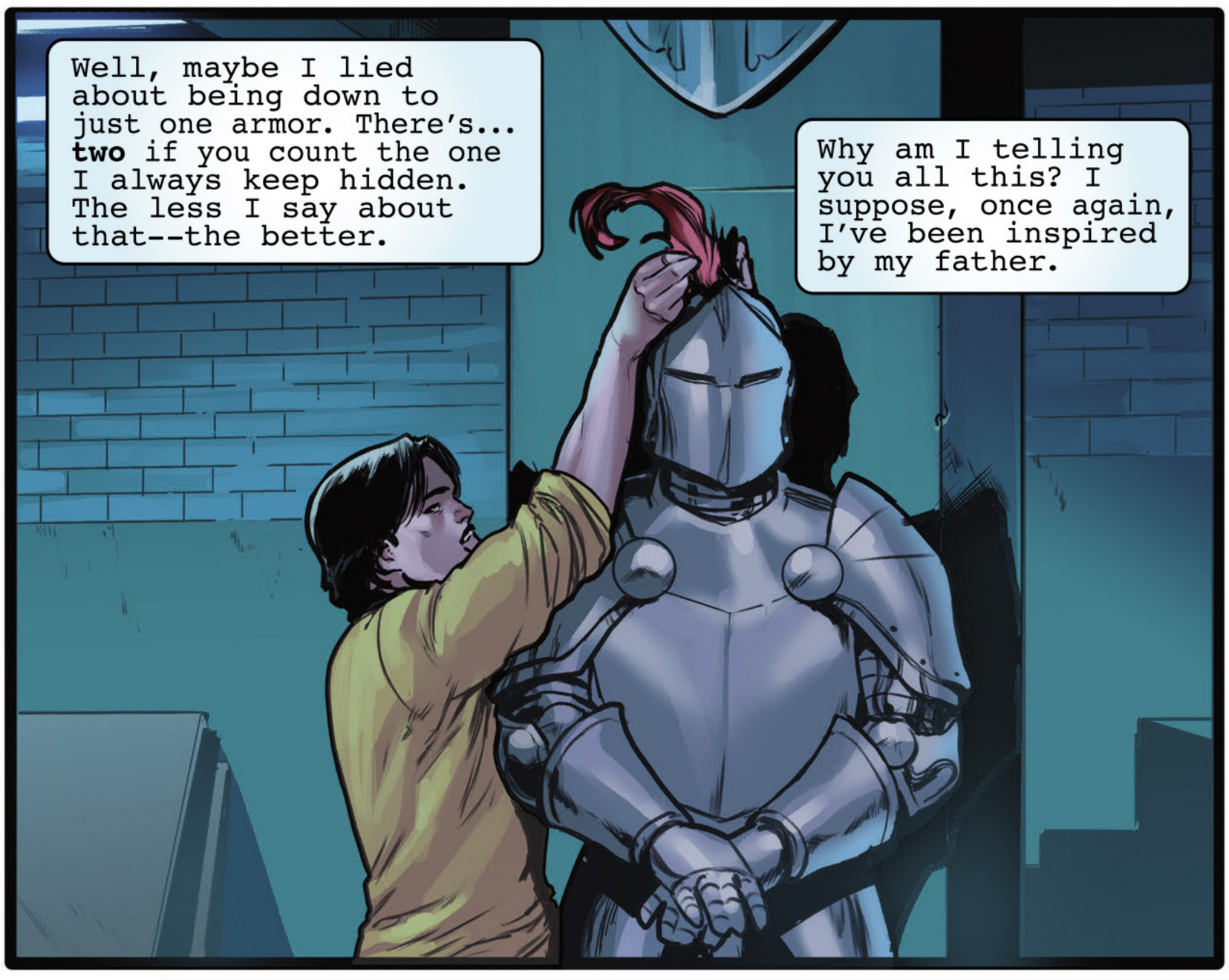
WHATEVER WE CALL THAT WORLD... *YOU* AND YOUR AVENGERS FRIENDS ABANDONED IT, TONY.*

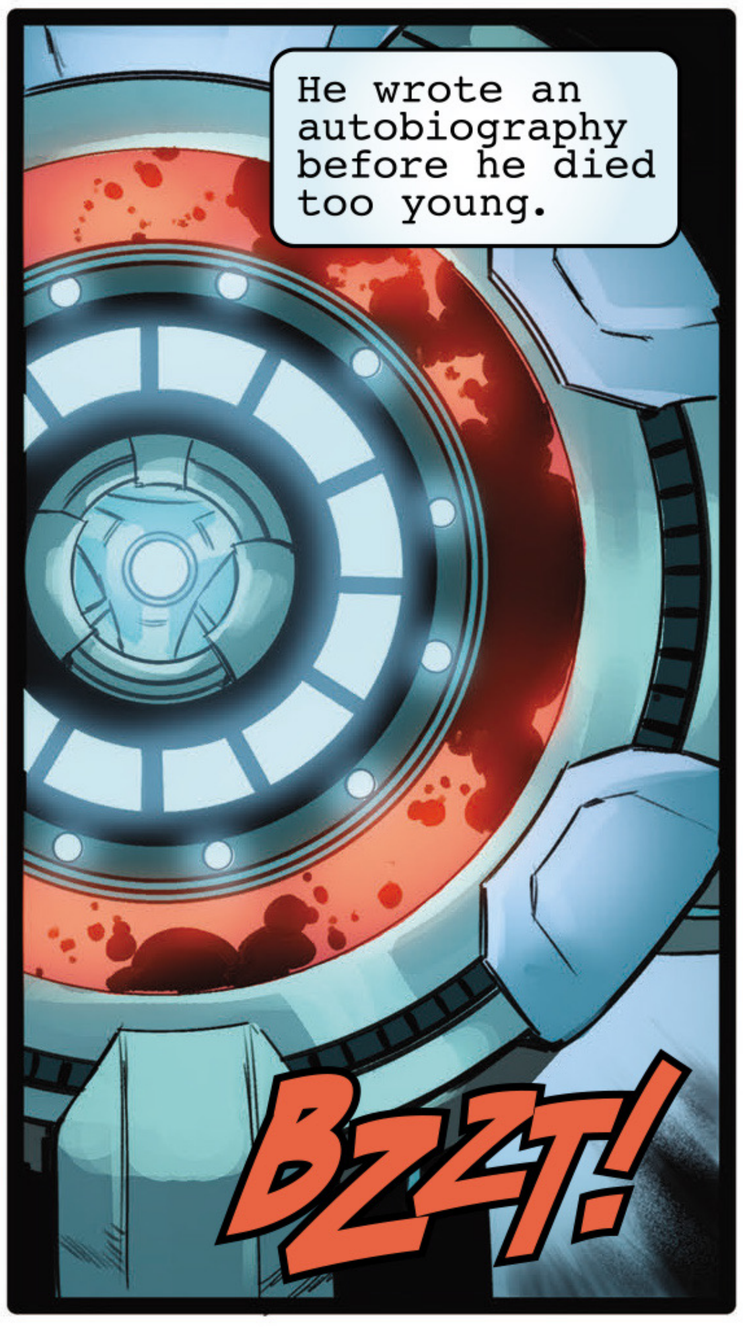
AN INEXCUSABLE BETRAYAL OF YOUR KIND.

*SEE *AVENGERS (2012) #1-3!* --DS


My workshops have always been the place I'm always most comfortable. This is the one in the basement of my brownstone.
I used to have rows and rows of armors. Went to war in them, but these days…

...I'm down to just the one. **The Mark 70.**

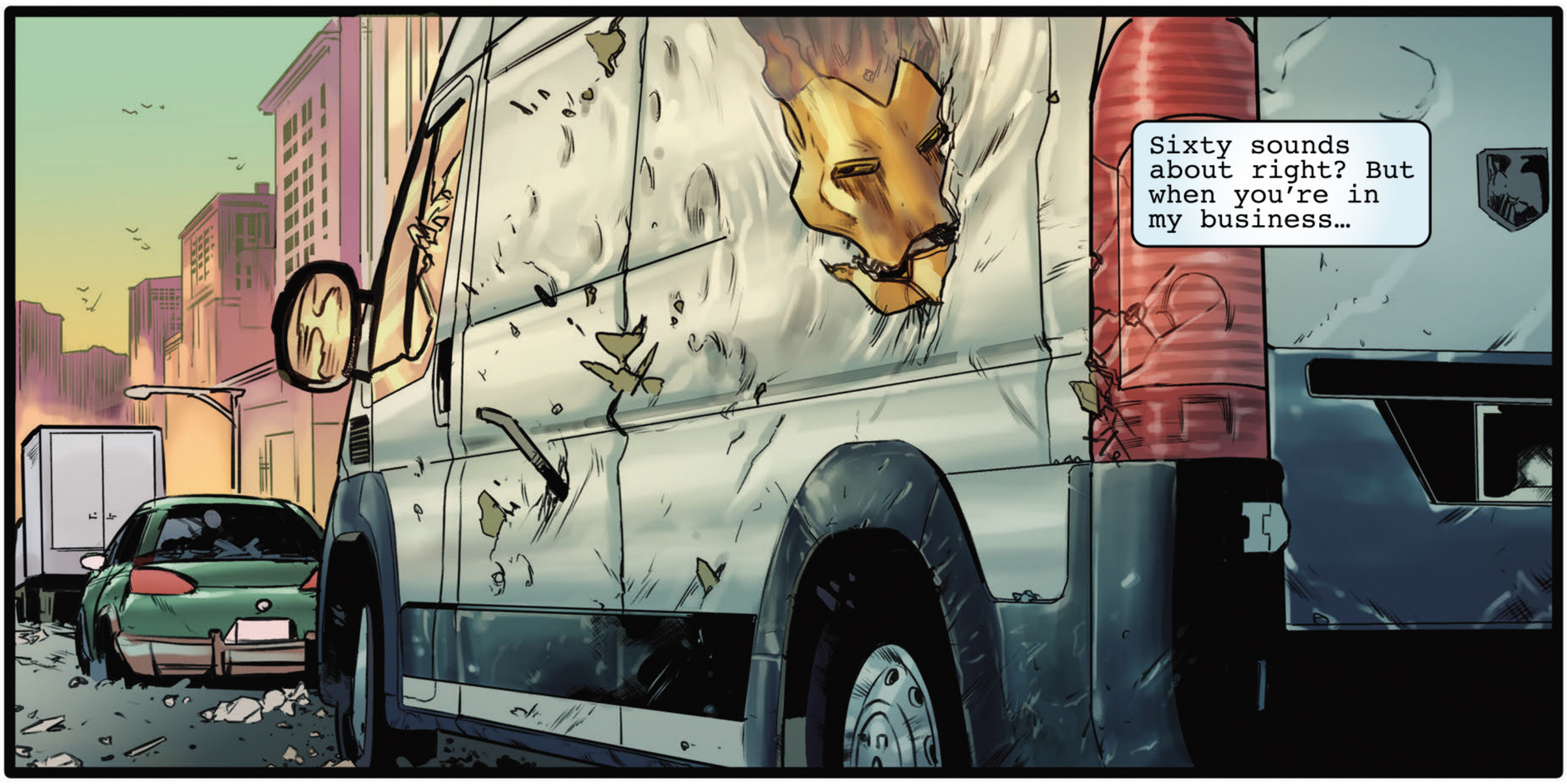

Well, maybe I lied about being down to just one armor. There's... **two** if you count the one I always keep hidden. The less I say about that--the better.
Why am I telling you all this? I suppose, once again, I've been inspired by my father.


He wrote an autobiography before he died too young.
BZZT!

I hope you laugh, I hope you cry as I tell you...

...my life's story.

You would think a person would wait for their golden years to attempt their autobiography.

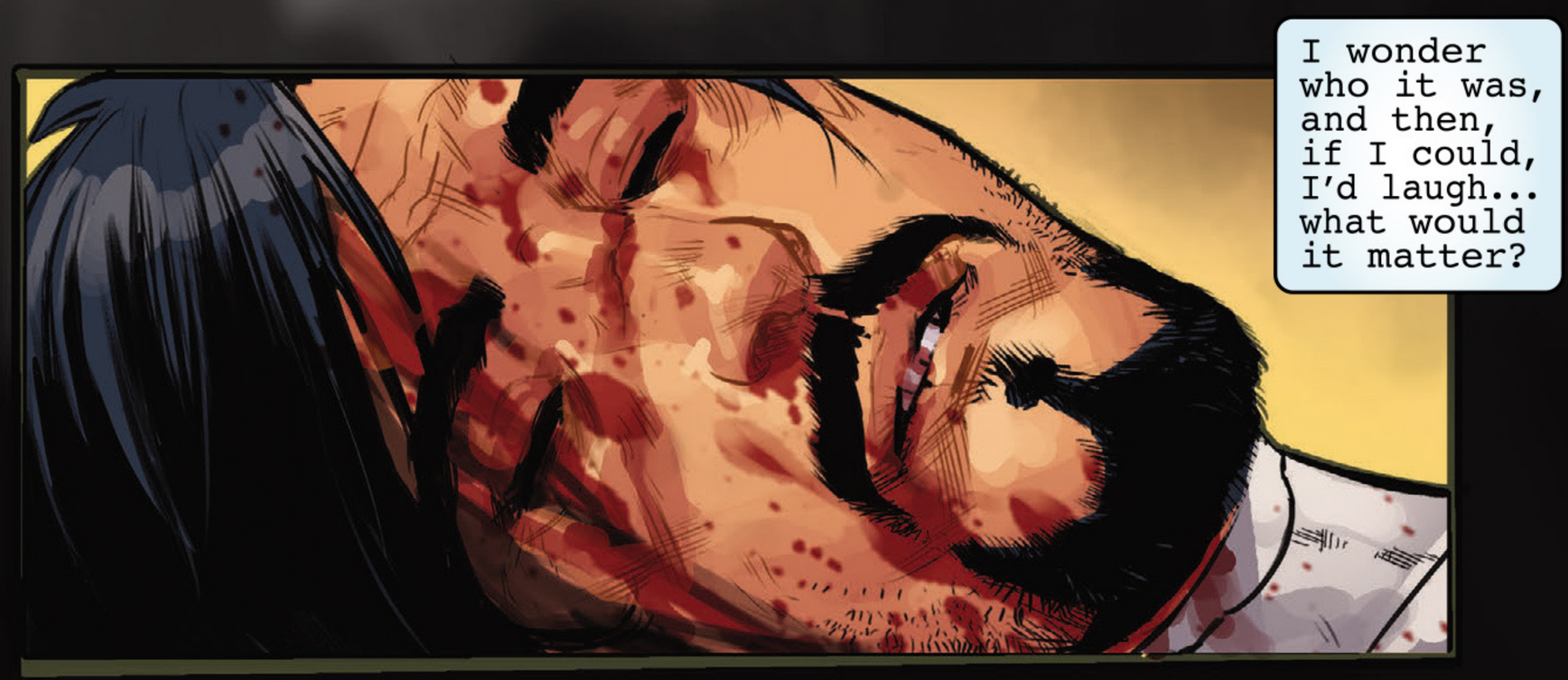

Sixty sounds about right? But when you're in my business…

…never put off making something today, because tomorrow may never come.

I'm lucky to be alive.

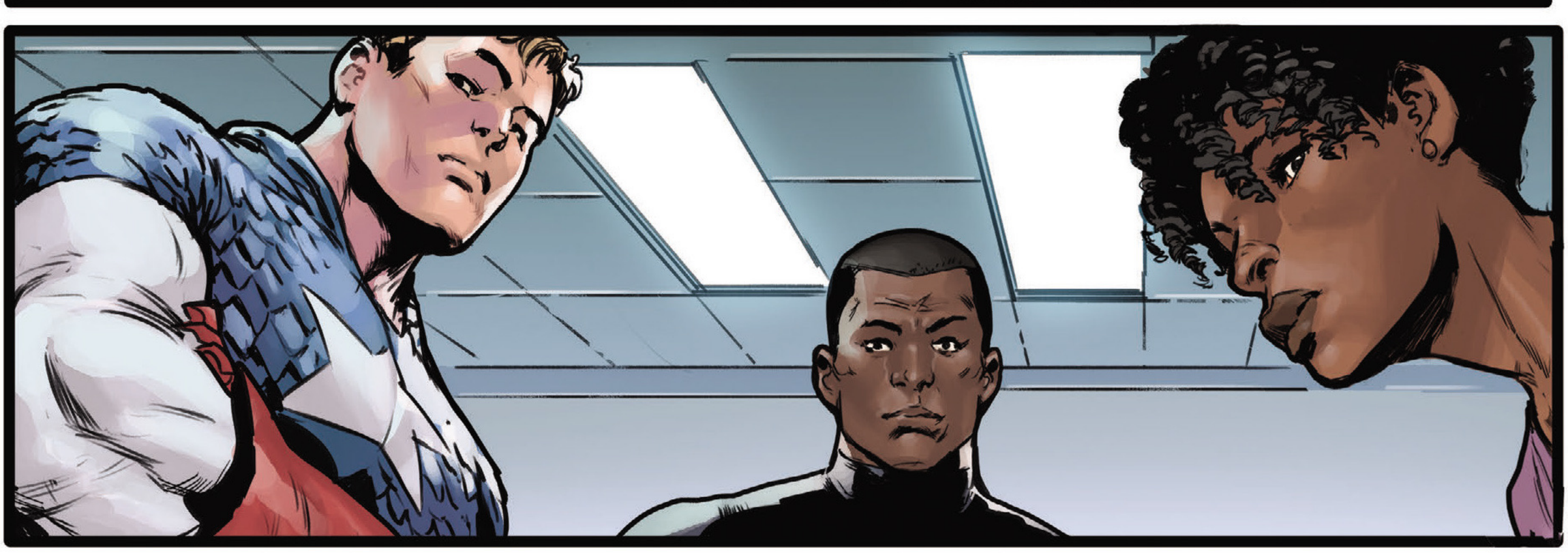
Not everyone is. I overhear the chatter as I'm carted off...
DO NOT CRO

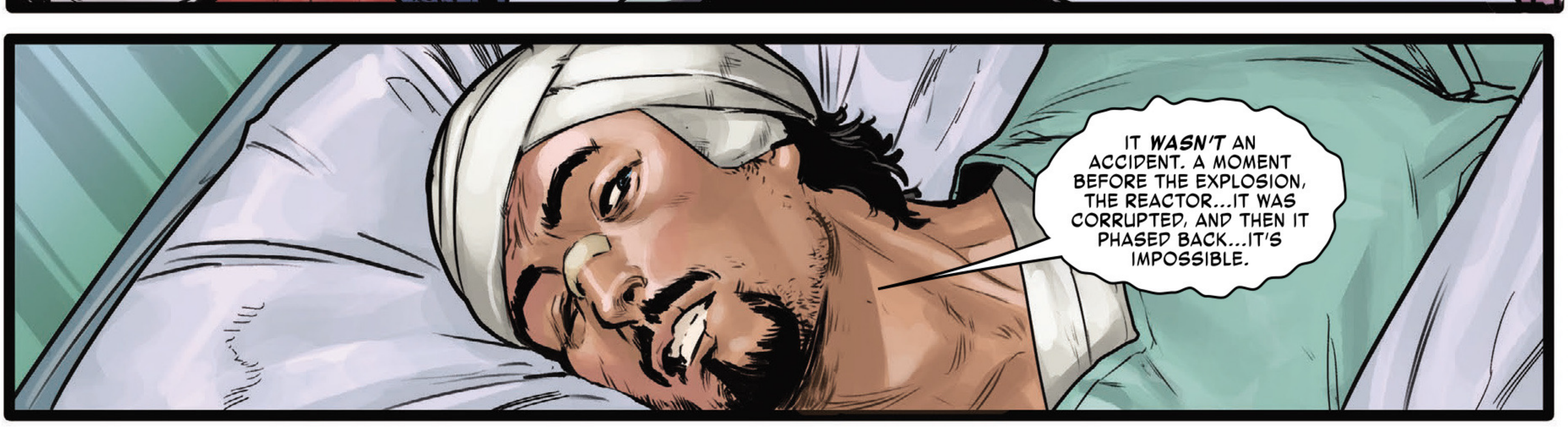
...one of my neighbors is dead on the scene.


I wonder who it was, and then, if I could, I'd laugh... what would it matter?

I don't know any of my neighbors anyway.
IF THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH HIS GENERATOR, WE COULDN'T FIND IT, CAP.
HE'S GOING TO BE UPSET WHEN HE COMES TO.
HE'S AWAKE, RHODEY...

...HE'S JUST PLAYING POSSUM.



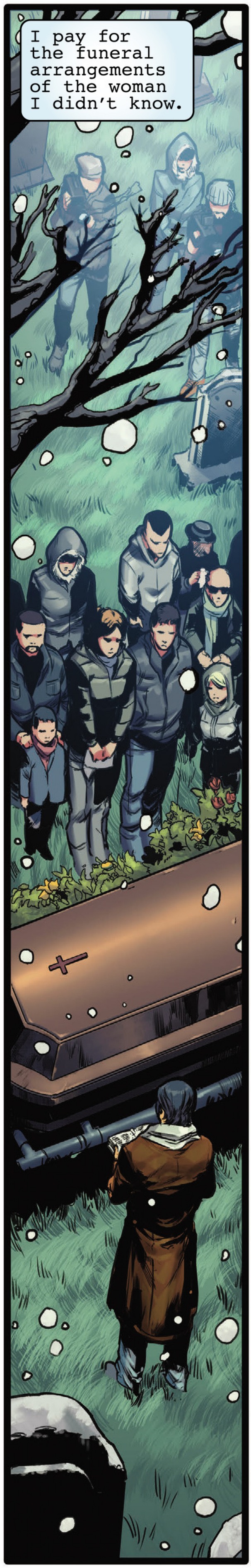

IT *WASN'T* AN ACCIDENT. A MOMENT BEFORE THE EXPLOSION, THE REACTOR...IT WAS CORRUPTED, AND THEN IT PHASED BACK...IT'S IMPOSSIBLE.

TONY, WE'VE LOOKED INTO IT AND FOUND NOTHING.
I DIDN'T FIND ANYTHING.

YOU BETTER HOPE YOU'RE BOTH WRONG--OTHERWISE... THERE'S SOMEONE OUT THERE SMARTER THAN US.

MAYBE, MAN, BUT... MAYBE IT WAS ALSO A MISTAKE WITH YOUR REACTOR?
IF NOT... THE WINNING ARGUMENT AGAINST YOU IS GONNA BE--

--THAT IT WAS A MISTAKE THAT I WAS LIVING IN A RESIDENTIAL AREA.
MAYBE YOU SHOULD BUNK WITH ME.
NO.
I push my friends away. It's not safe to be in my orbit right now.


I pay for the funeral arrangements of the woman I didn't know.

Marielle Marcus. She immigrated here in the '70s. Lived a good life. Just not long enough.

Remember her name.

She will be avenged.

After a few days, I meet with my attorney... Jennifer Walters, A.K.A. **She-Hulk.**
IS IT DONE, JEN?
I DID WHAT YOU ASKED. BUT I HAVE TO TELL YOU IT'S NOT ADVISABLE TO--
I APPRECIATE THE CONCERN. I KNOW YOU'RE JUST DOING YOUR JOB. I WANT TO DO IT *MY* WAY.
TONY, SOME OF THE PEOPLE WHO ARE SUING YOU FOR DAMAGES FROM THE EXPLOSION WEREN'T EVEN IN NEW YORK CITY THAT DAY.
I CAN PROVE ONE GUY WAS ACROSS THE RIVER IN--
DAMMIT, JEN--
--PAY THEM ALL OFF!

...
THERE MAY BE CRIMINAL CHARGES. BUT YOU'RE SMART--YOU KNOW THAT ALREADY.
EVEN WITHOUT A SUIT, YOU STILL HAVE THE BEST *REPULSORS* IN THE BUSINESS, TONY.

I'M SORRY.
NO, IT'S REFRESHING TO GET YELLED AT BY A CLIENT. NOBODY DOES THAT ANYMORE.

I COULDN'T FIND ANYTHING WRONG WITH THE REACTOR. RIRI COULDN'T. HELL, I EVEN SUCKED IT UP AND ASKED REED RICHARDS.
IT JUST SUDDENLY... LOST ITS STABILITY.

HA.
MAYBE JUST LIKE *ME!*

YOU'VE GOT POWER OF ATTORNEY.
SETTLE. PAY EVERYBODY OFF.
AND IF WE STRIKE BEDROCK IN YOUR CHECKING ACCOUNT?
WELL, I'LL HAVE TO GO INVENT SOMETHING.

When the chips are down, I throw myself into it.

What is "it" exactly? Well, in the past, it was a bottle, but even before that...

...“it” was a cave.

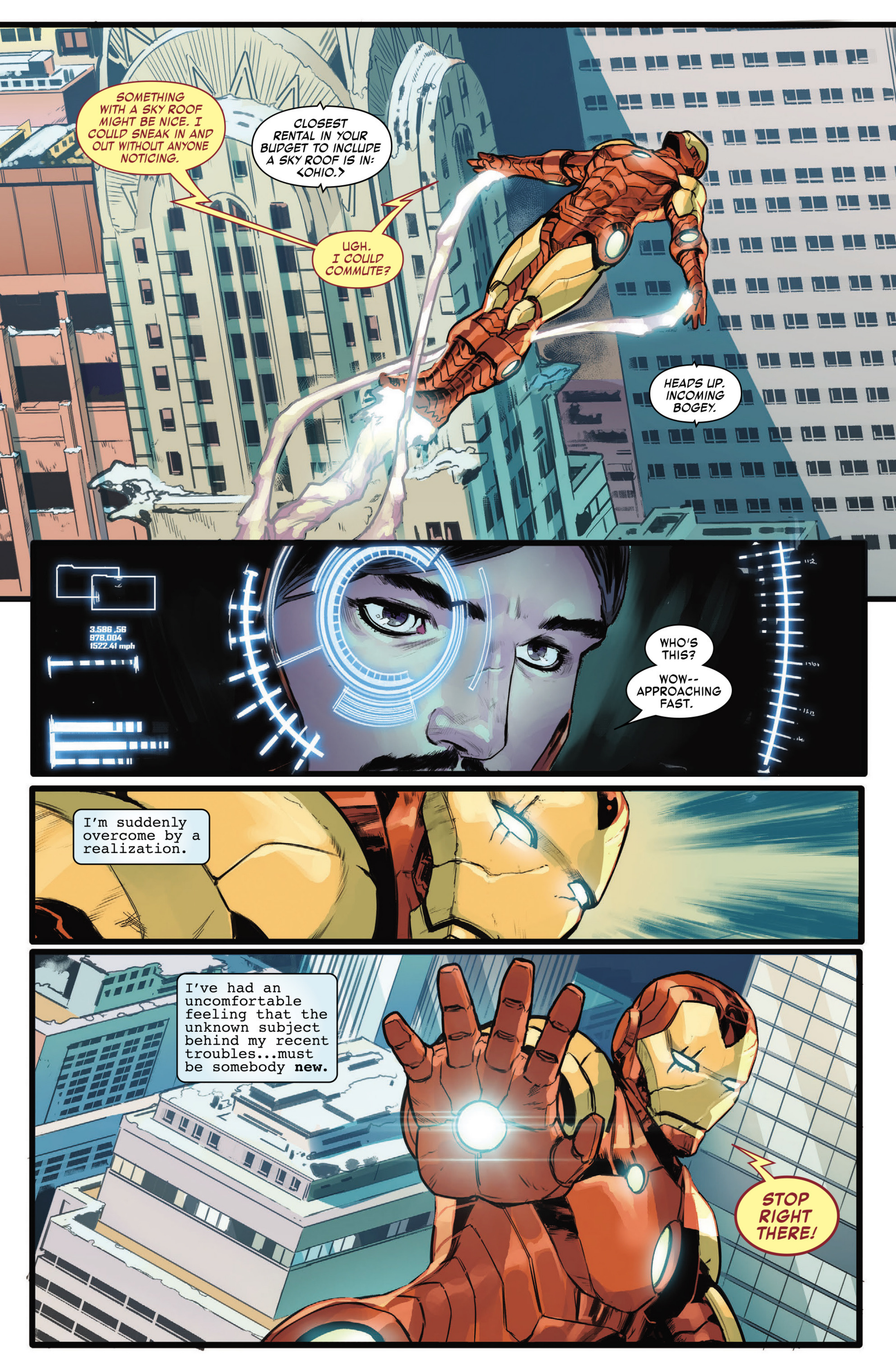
That's what this old Jersey City cab depot is...

...it's a cave to retreat into. A place to work.

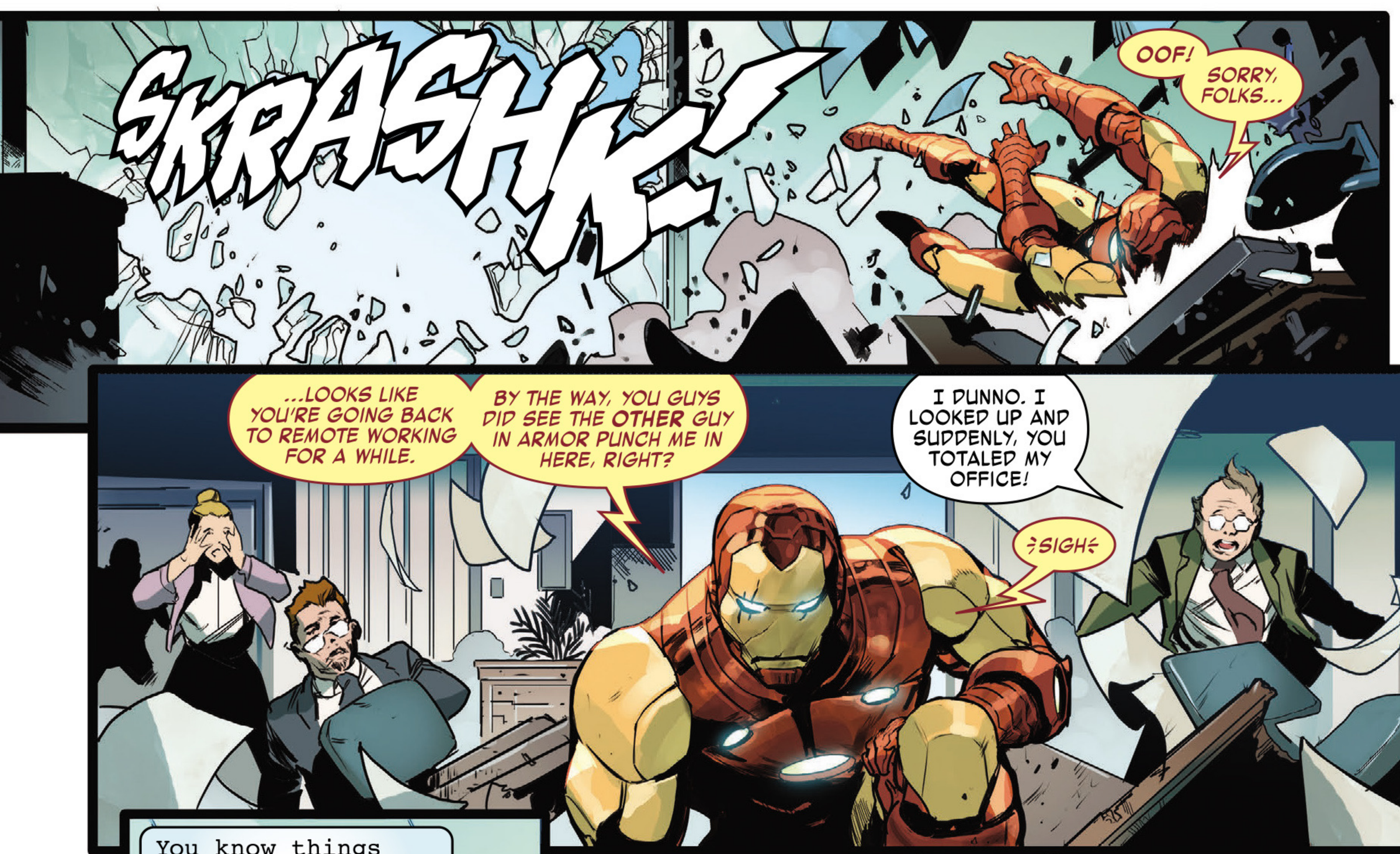
A place to live while I lick my wounds.

I won't need it forever, but it's good for now. The best part: No one will die because they're Tony Stark's neighbor.

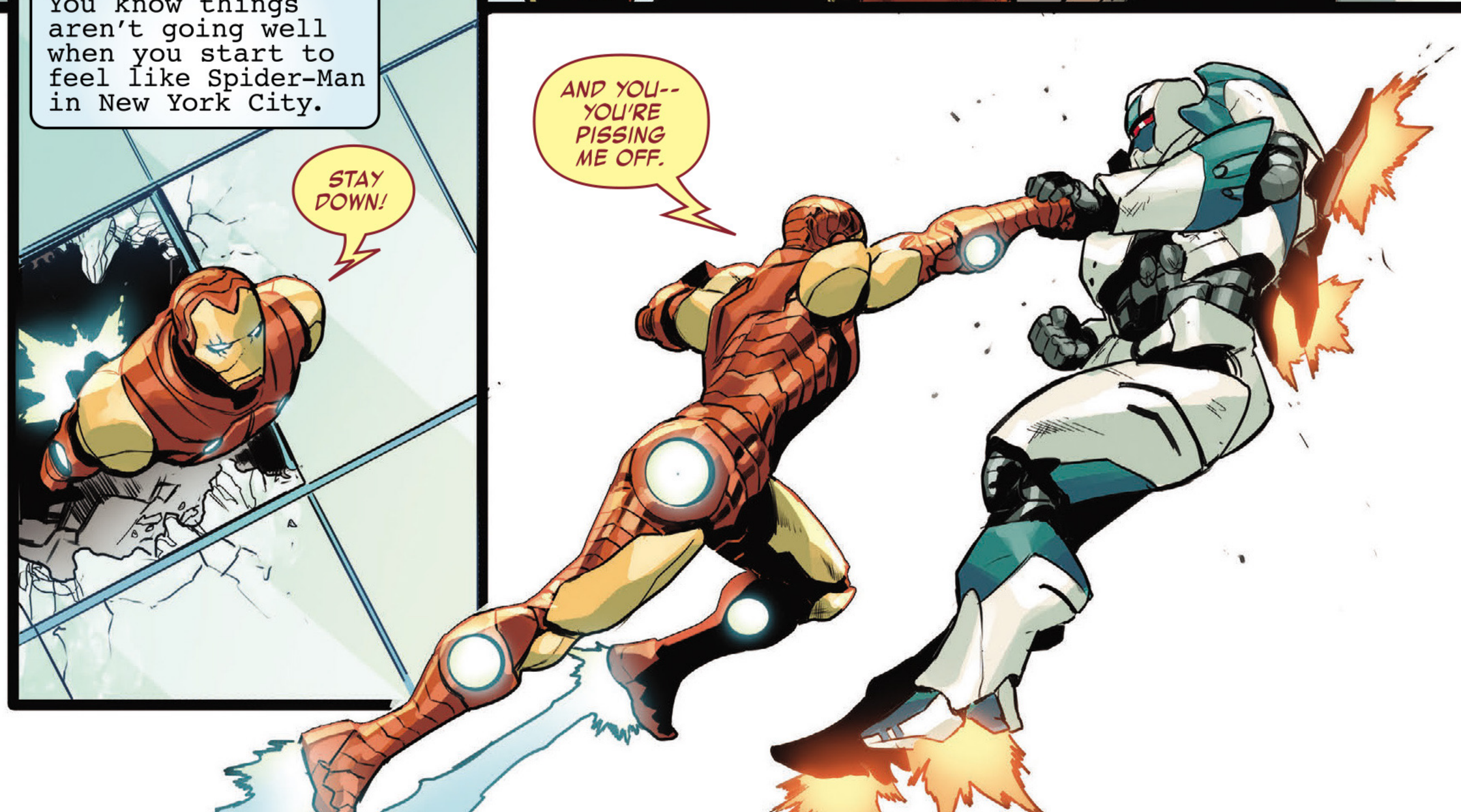
I make repairs to the Mark 70, and I'm done wallowing in self-pity for now.
The 70 needs a test flight, and I'd like a proper apartment--if I can find one that will work on a **budget.**
Damn, I **hate** that word.
B.O.S.S., LOAD UP THE REAL ESTATE LISTINGS-- THEY'RE TODAY'S FLIGHT PLAN.


SOMETHING WITH A SKY ROOF MIGHT BE NICE. I COULD SNEAK IN AND OUT WITHOUT ANYONE NOTICING.
CLOSEST RENTAL IN YOUR BUDGET TO INCLUDE A SKY ROOF IS IN: <OHIO.>
UGH. I COULD COMMUTE?
HEADS UP. INCOMING BOGEY.
3.586 ,56
978.004
1522.41 mph
WHO'S THIS?
WOW-- APPROACHING FAST.
I'm suddenly overcome by a realization.
I've had an uncomfortable feeling that the unknown subject behind my recent troubles...must be somebody **new.**
STOP RIGHT THERE!

SKRABOOM!
UGHN!

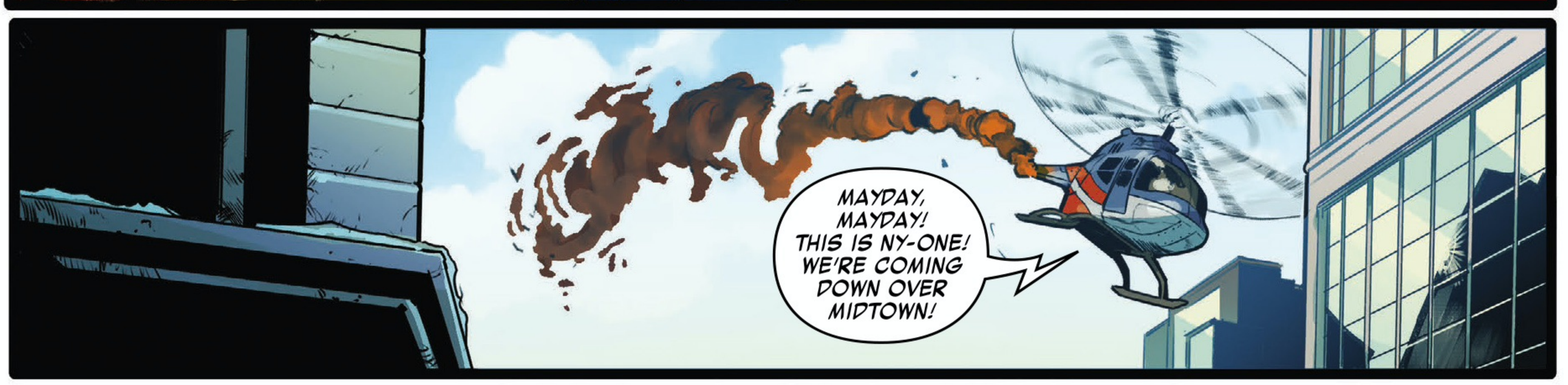

SKRASHK-!
OOF!
SORRY, FOLKS...

...LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE GOING BACK TO REMOTE WORKING FOR A WHILE.
BY THE WAY, YOU GUYS DID SEE THE OTHER GUY IN ARMOR PUNCH ME IN HERE, RIGHT?
I DUNNO. I LOOKED UP AND SUDDENLY, YOU TOTALED MY OFFICE!
SIGH


You know things aren't going well when you start to feel like Spider-Man in New York City.
STAY DOWN!
AND YOU-- YOU'RE PISSING ME OFF.

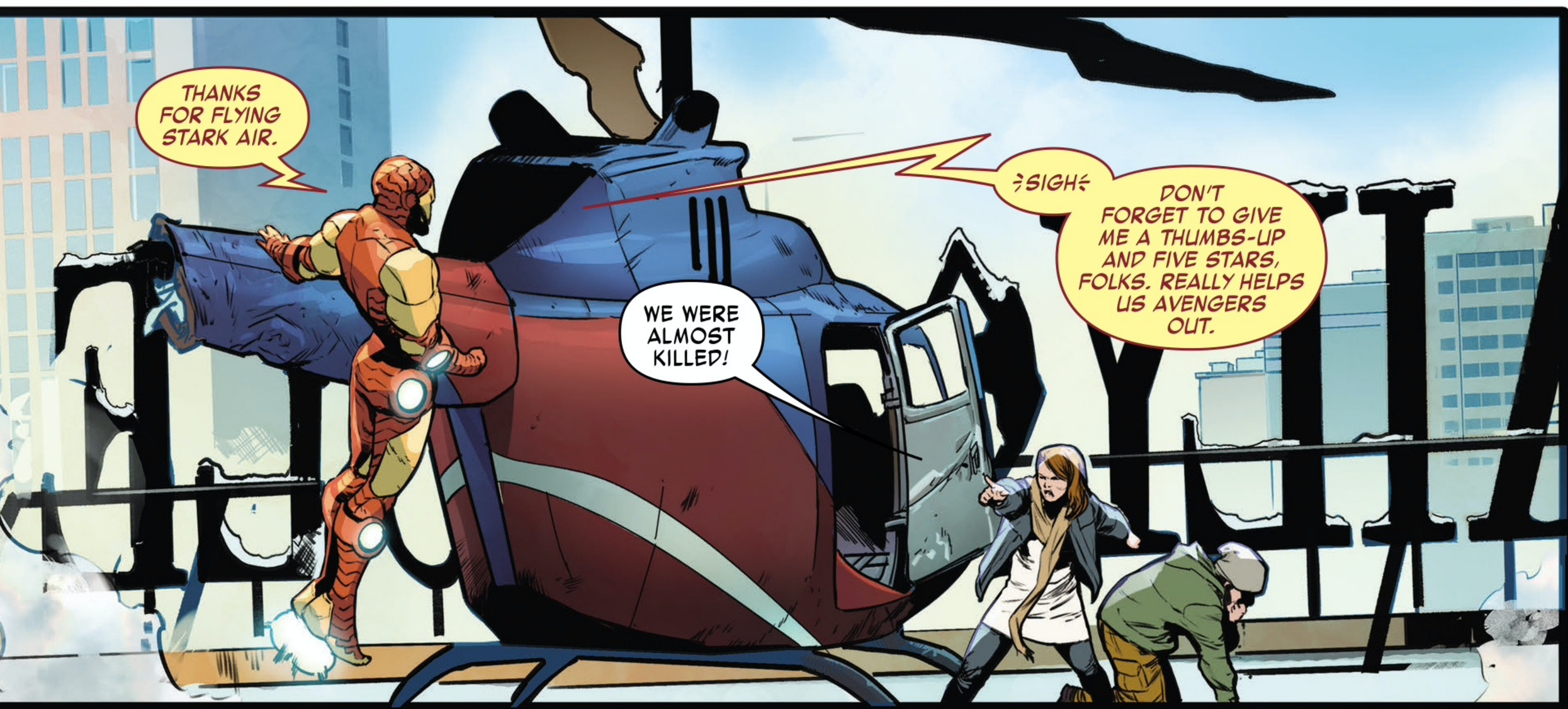
IF IT WAS YOU WHO BLEW UP MY HOME, AND KILLED MY NEIGHBOR, YOU SHOULD CONFESS NOW WHILE THE MEDIA IS HERE.
IT'LL INCREASE THE ODDS I PULL MY PUNCHES AND YOU SURVIVE THIS.
DIDN'T YOU BLOW UP YOUR HOME?
The voice is heavily modulated. No identifying it.

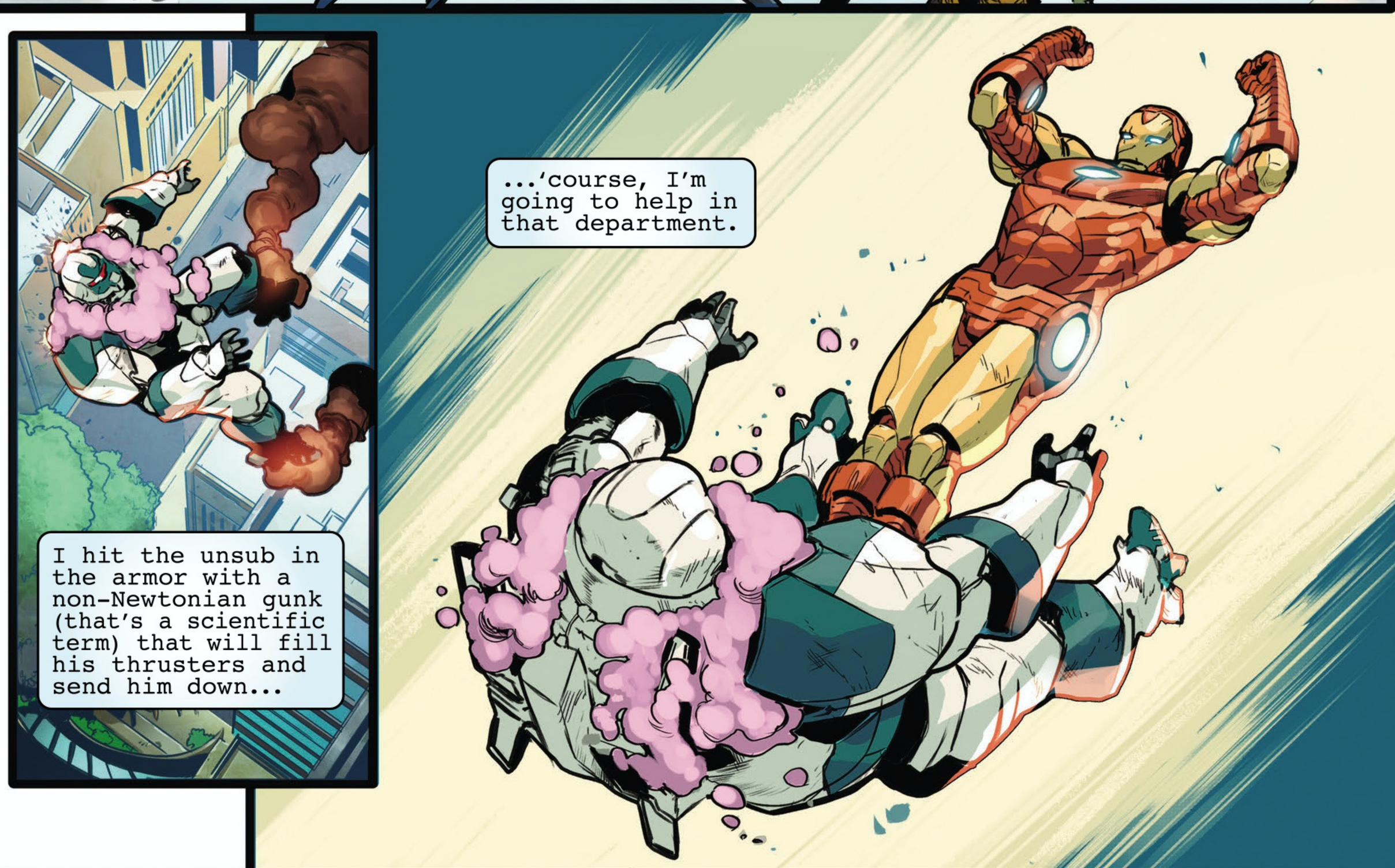
I'M JUST THE MESSENGER. I WOULDN'T CONCERN YOURSELF WITH WHO I AM--
--YOU WON'T BE ALIVE MUCH LONGER TO CARE!
SKRABOOM!


MAYDAY, MAYDAY! THIS IS NY-ONE! WE'RE COMING DOWN OVER MIDTOWN!

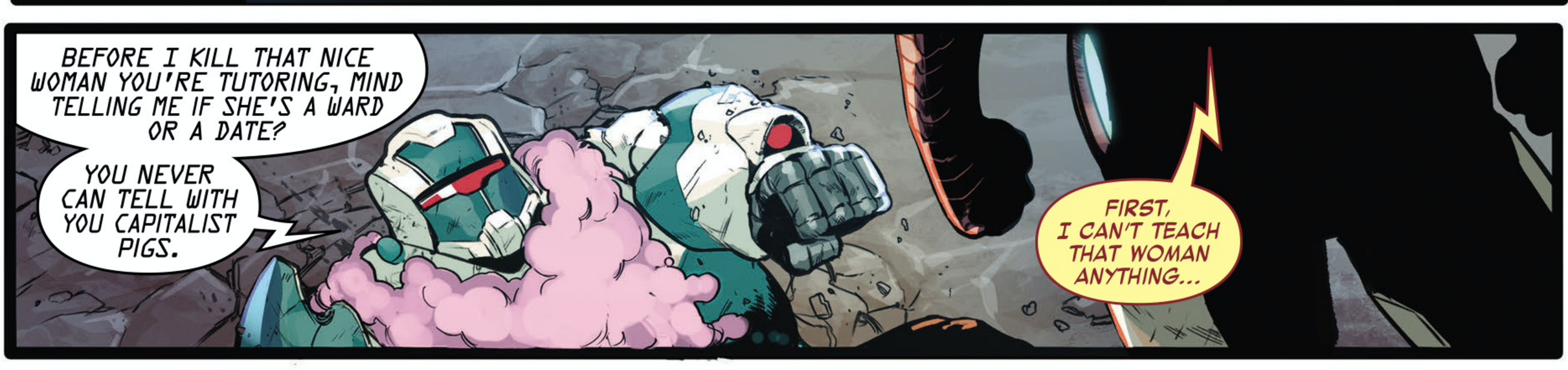
THIS IS IRON MAN ON ALL FREQUENCIES-- AVOID THE AIR OVER MIDTOWN.
STEADY, PILOT. I'VE GOT YOU!
BEFORE THIS IS OVER AND I'M UNMASKED, YOU'LL BE DEAD, STARK.
BWEEM!
KRRK!
AARGH!
ALL RIGHT, "MESSENGER." LET'S SEE IF YOU KNOW THE SAFEST WAY TO AFFECT A COPTER RESCUE?

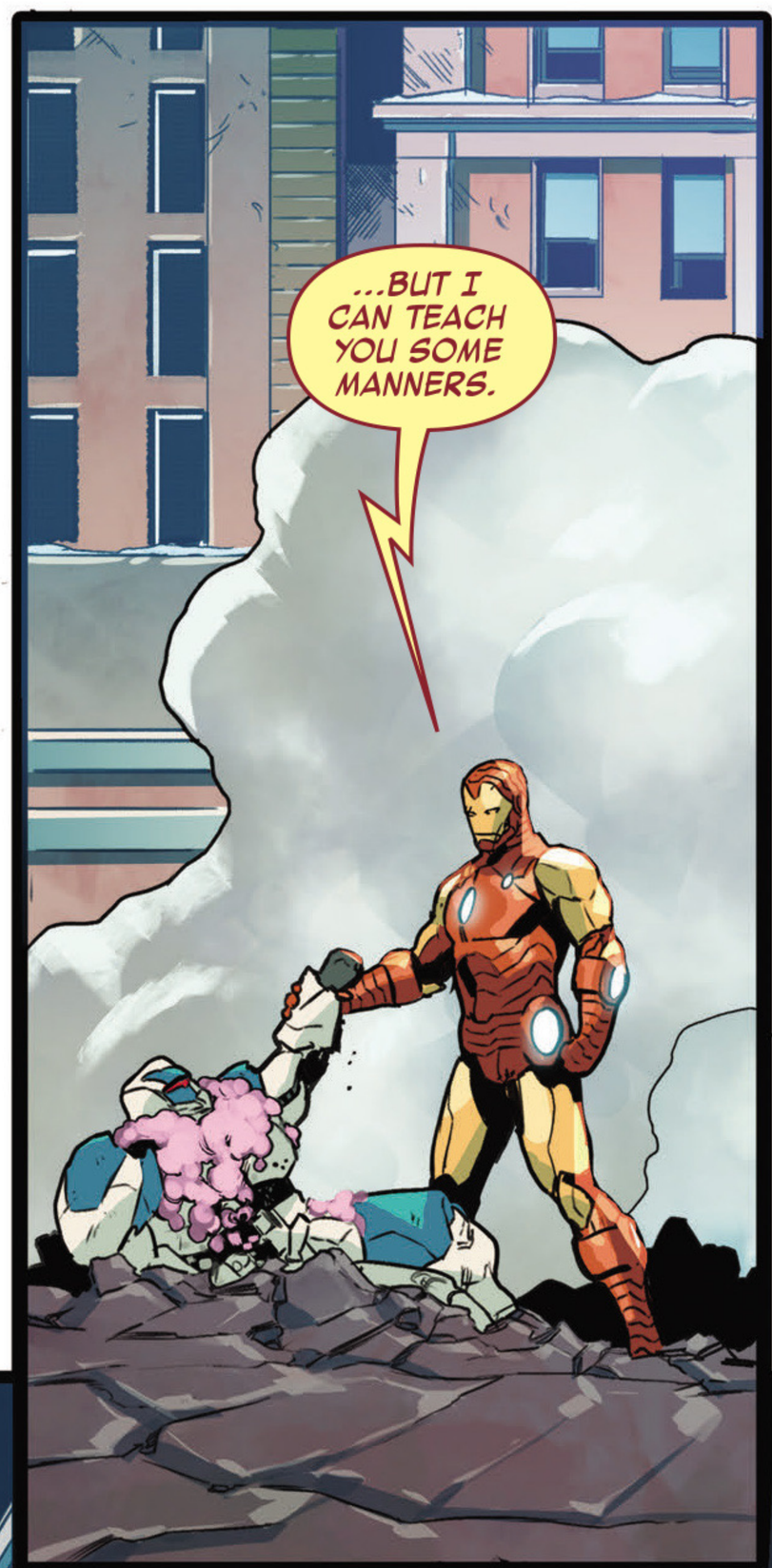
WHO CARES?
YOU SHOULD.
YOU'RE GONNA HELP OUT. THE FIRST THING YOU WANT TO DO IS GET RID OF THOSE PESKY ROTORS.
CHAKK!
CHAKK!
TARGET LOCKED
DEPLOY NONLETHAL ROUND THREE.
PAF
SPLAKK

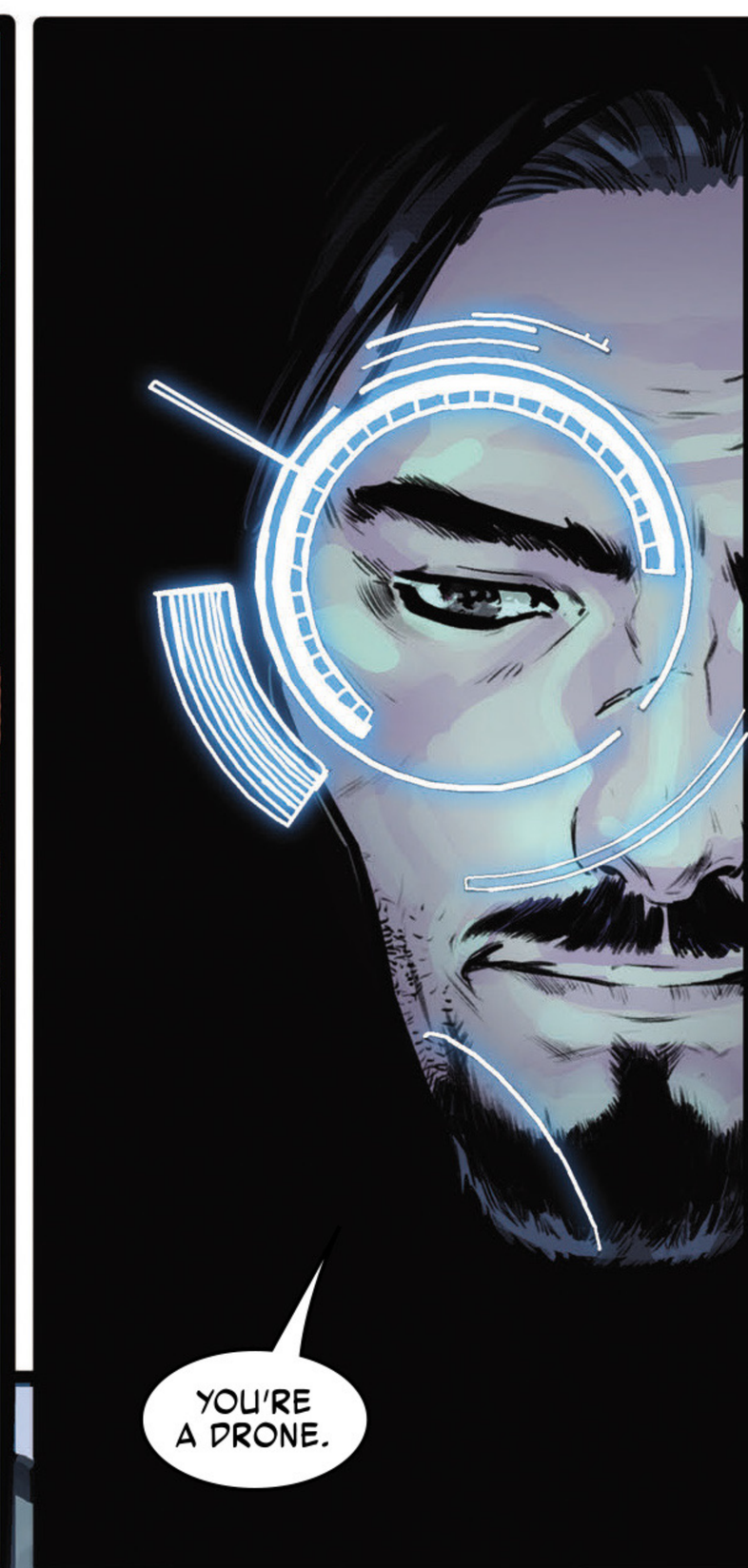

THANKS FOR FLYING STARK AIR.
WE WERE ALMOST KILLED!
SIGH
DON'T FORGET TO GIVE ME A THUMBS-UP AND FIVE STARS, FOLKS. REALLY HELPS US AVENGERS OUT.


I hit the unsub in the armor with a non-Newtonian gunk (that's a scientific term) that will fill his thrusters and send him down...
...'course, I'm going to help in that department.

BOOM!


BEFORE I KILL THAT NICE WOMAN YOU'RE TUTORING, MIND TELLING ME IF SHE'S A WARD OR A DATE?
YOU NEVER CAN TELL WITH YOU CAPITALIST PIGS.
FIRST, I CAN'T TEACH THAT WOMAN ANYTHING...



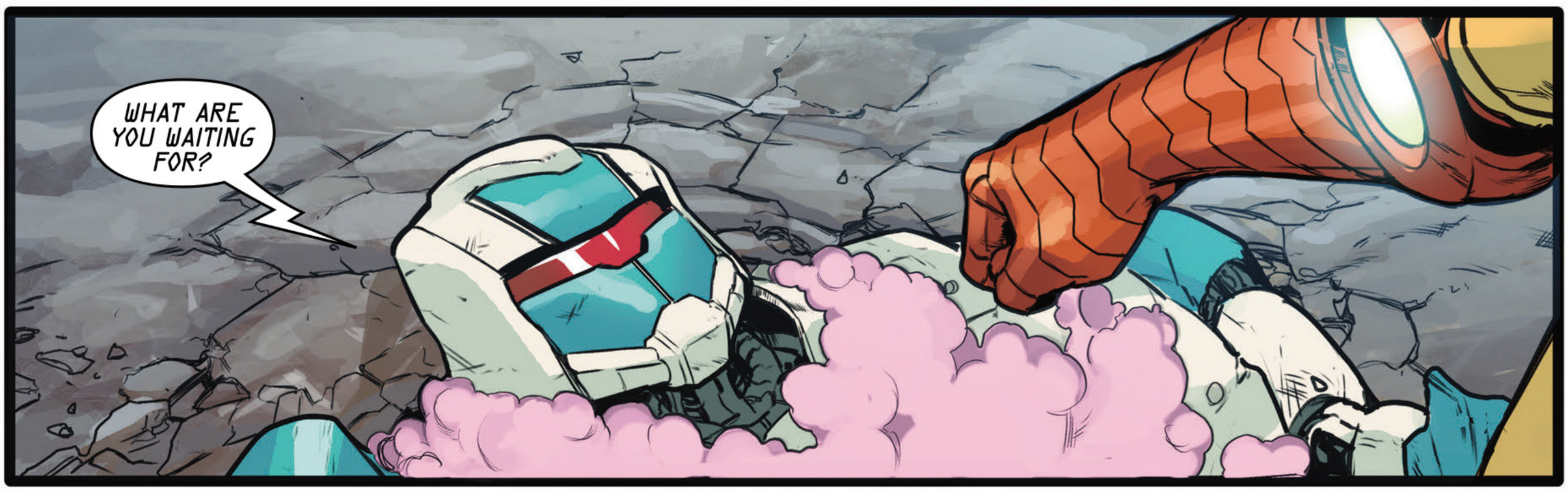


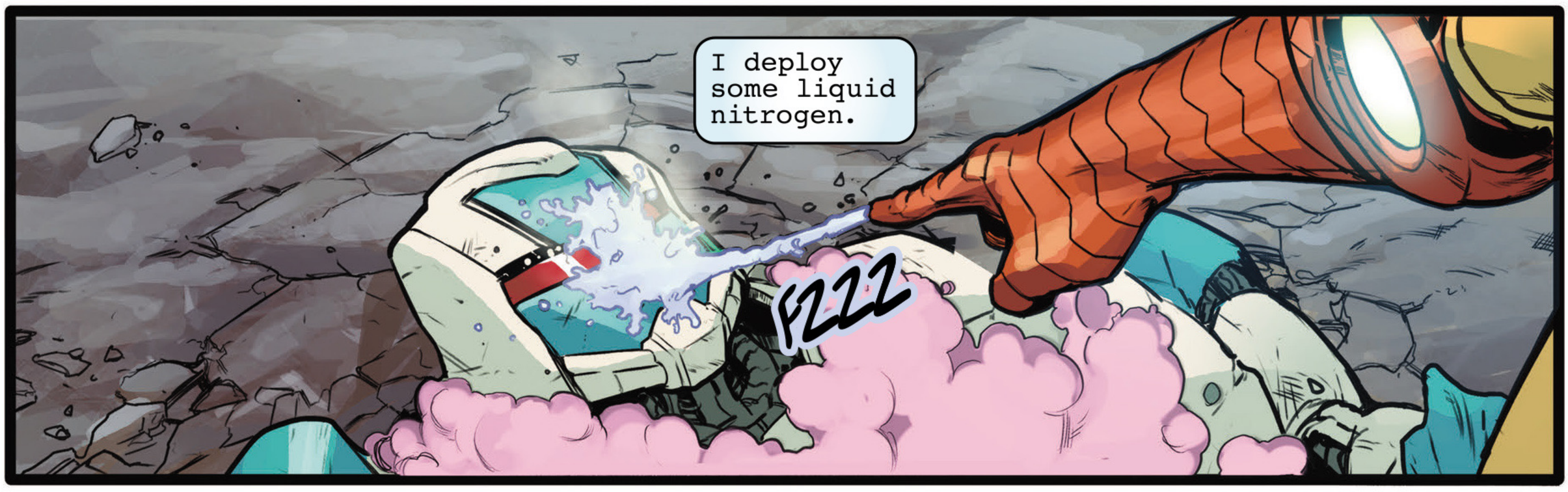
Time to shred this thing and go home.

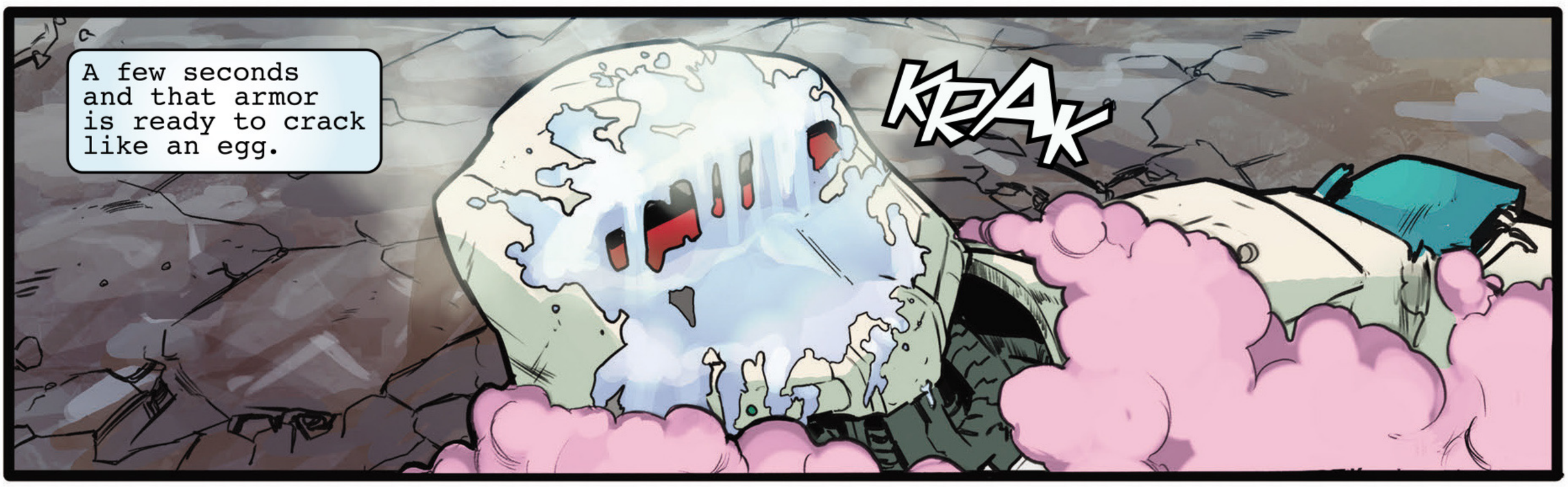
You know... I mentioned Spider-Man before.

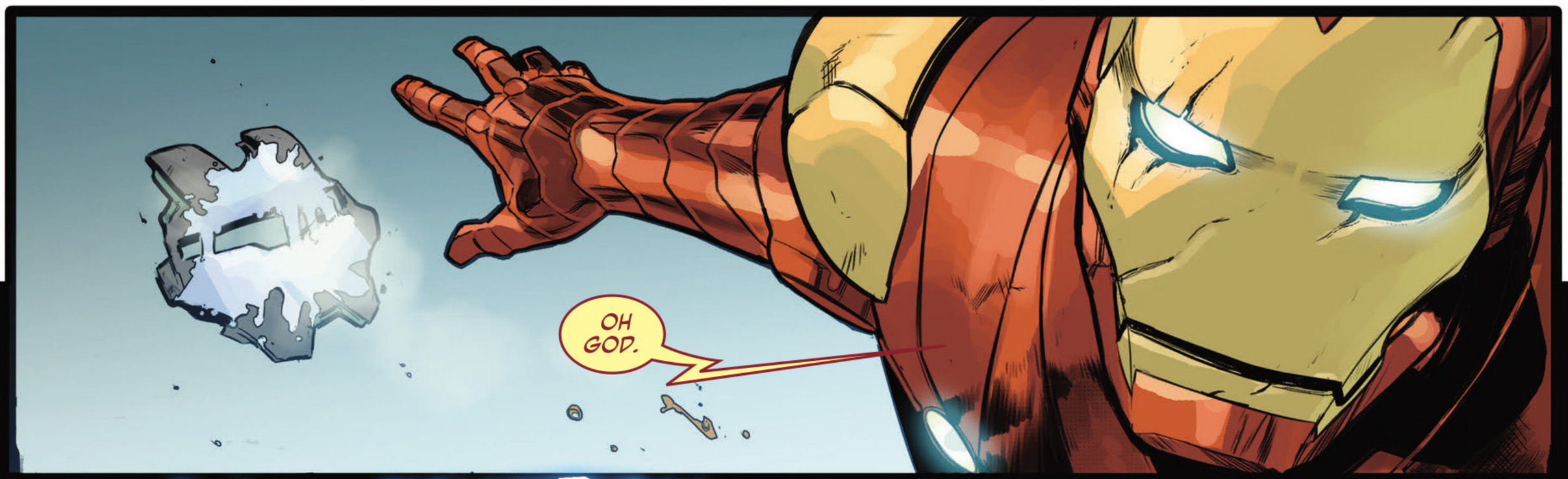
He's talked about having a "buzzing in his head" when he's in danger, and I think we all have it to a certain extent.

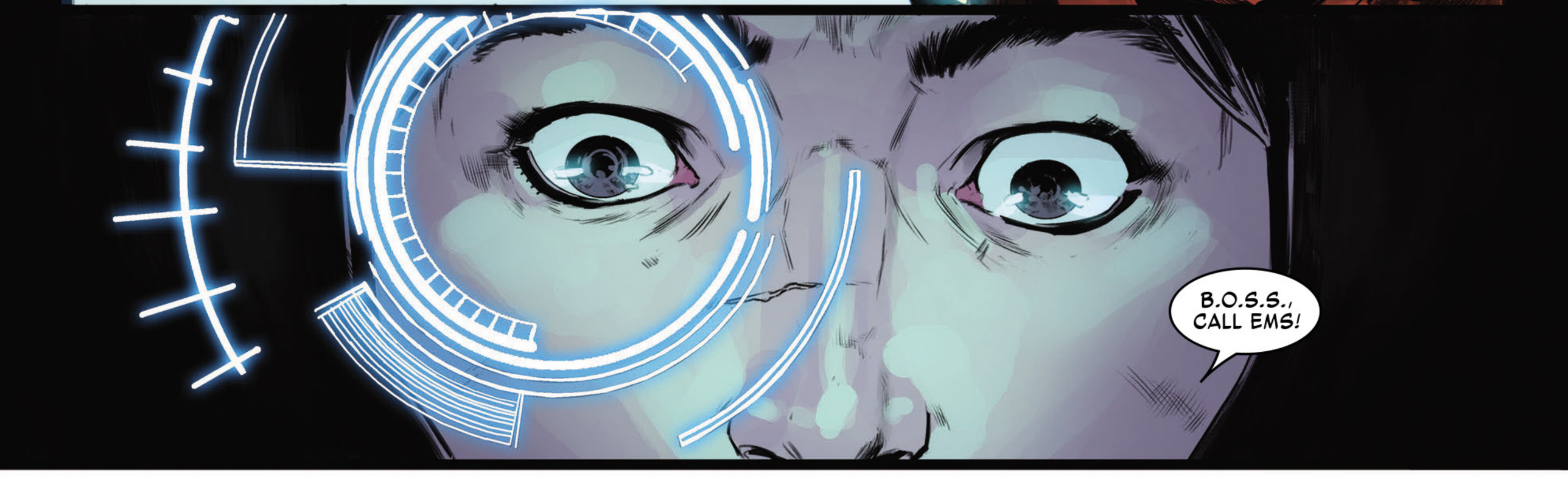
Listening to that little voice can save lives.

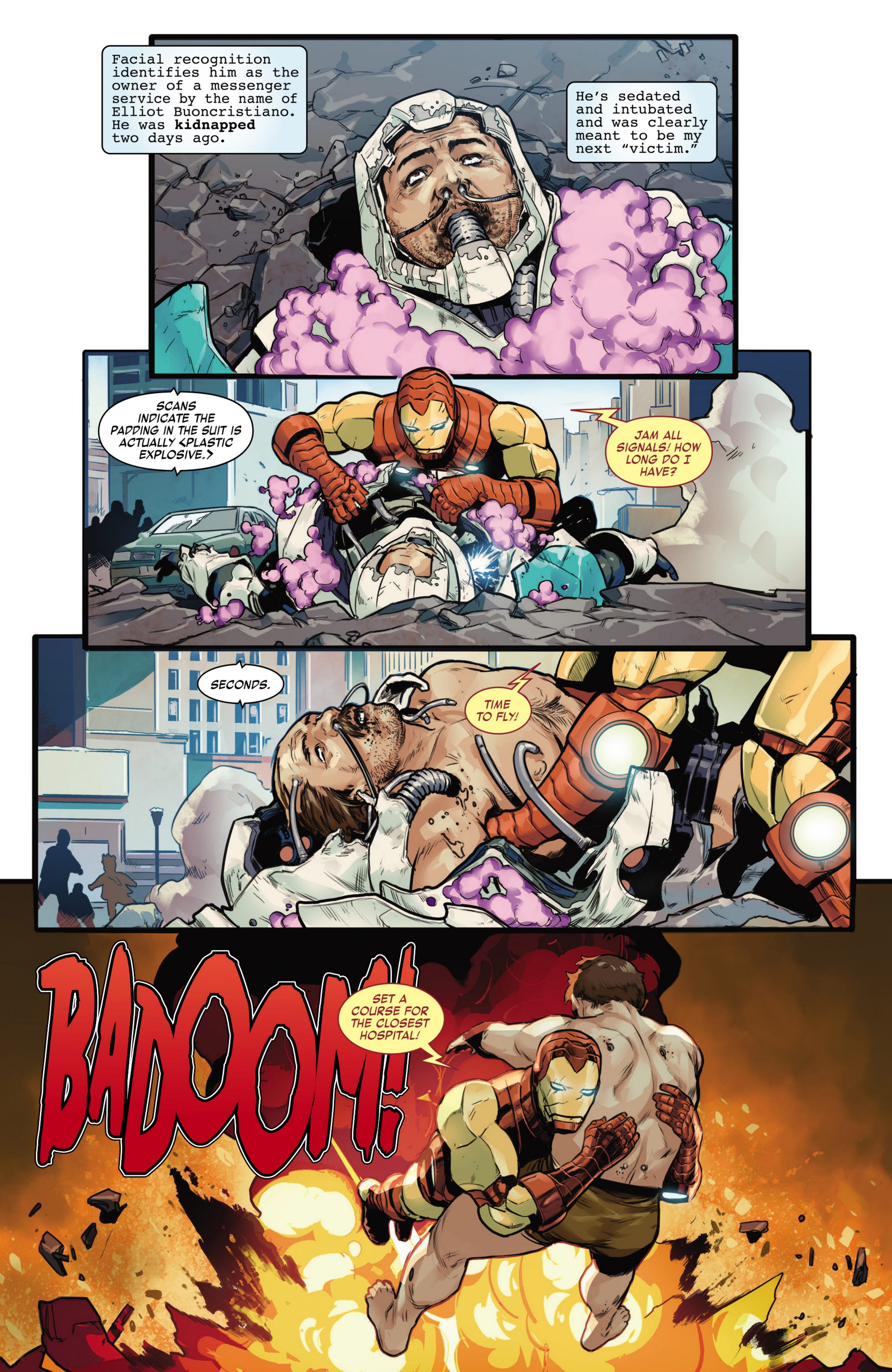

WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?


I deploy some liquid nitrogen.
FZZZ

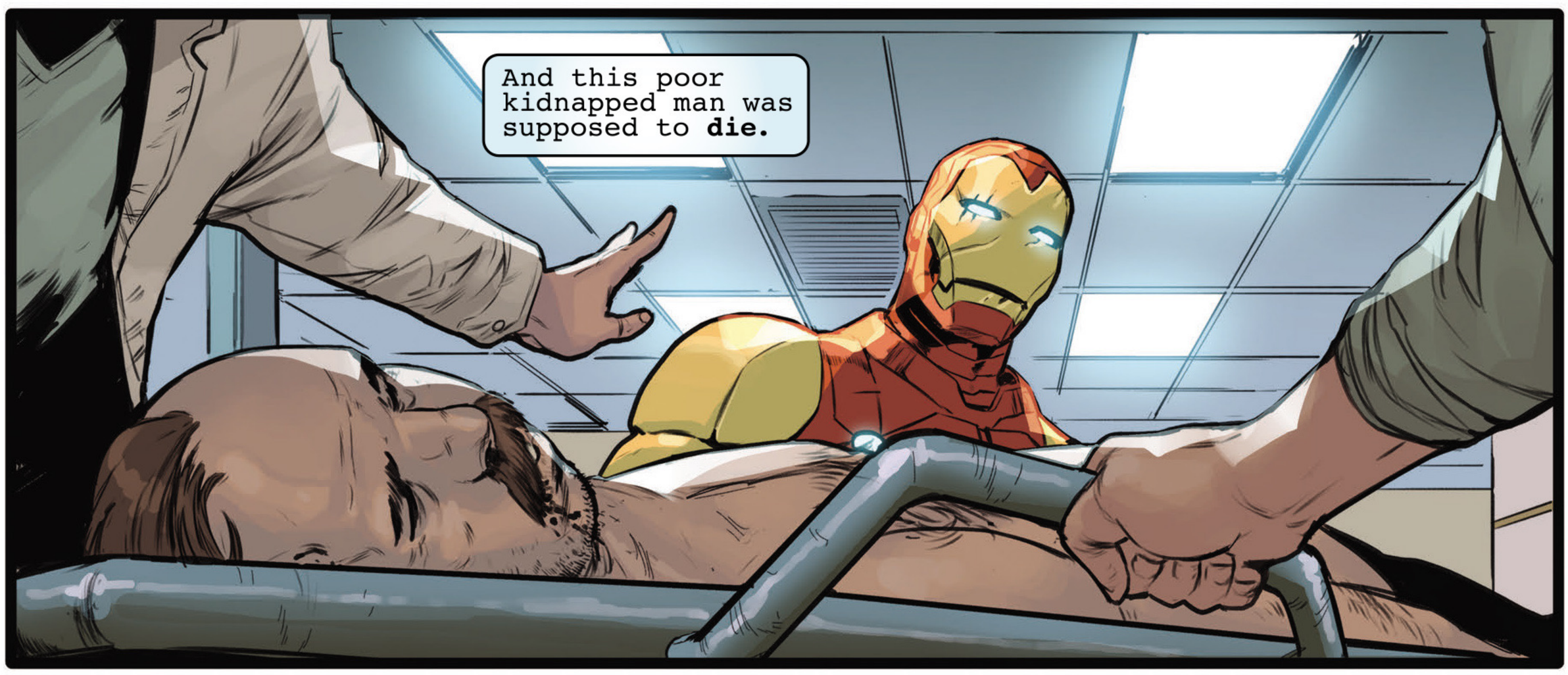

A few seconds and that armor is ready to crack like an egg.
KRAK

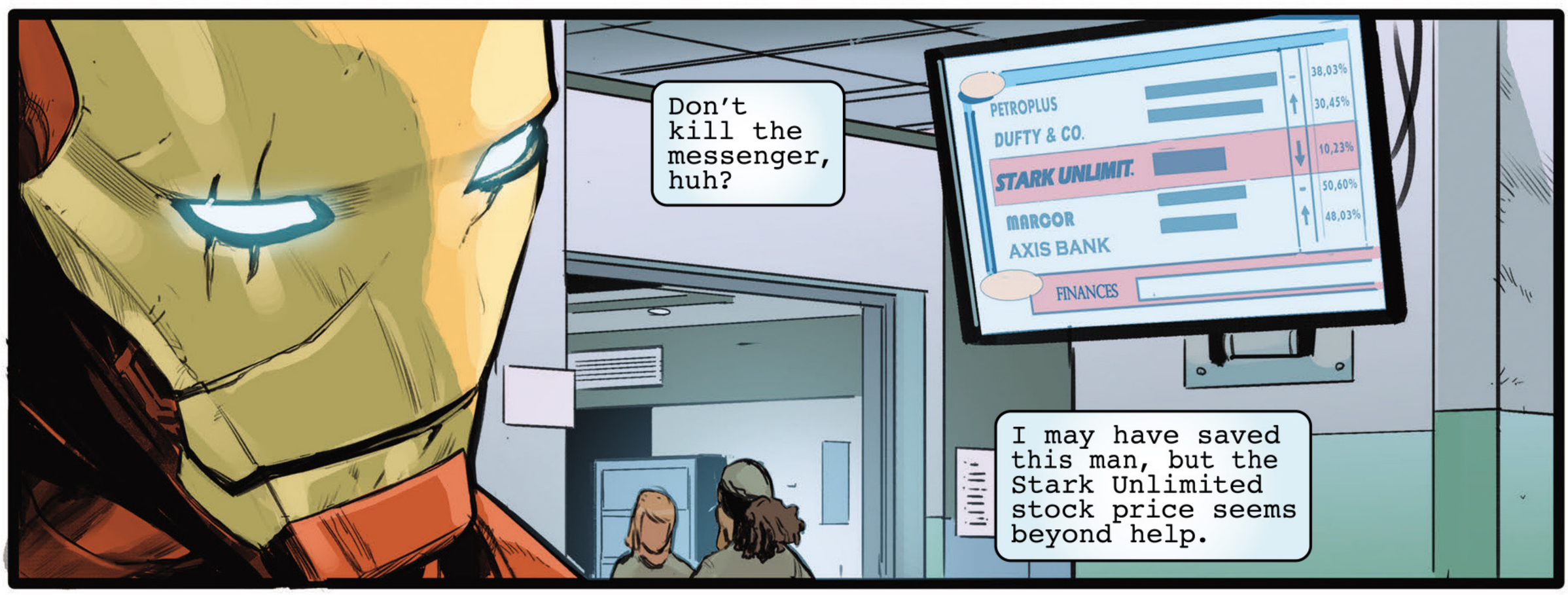

OH GOD.

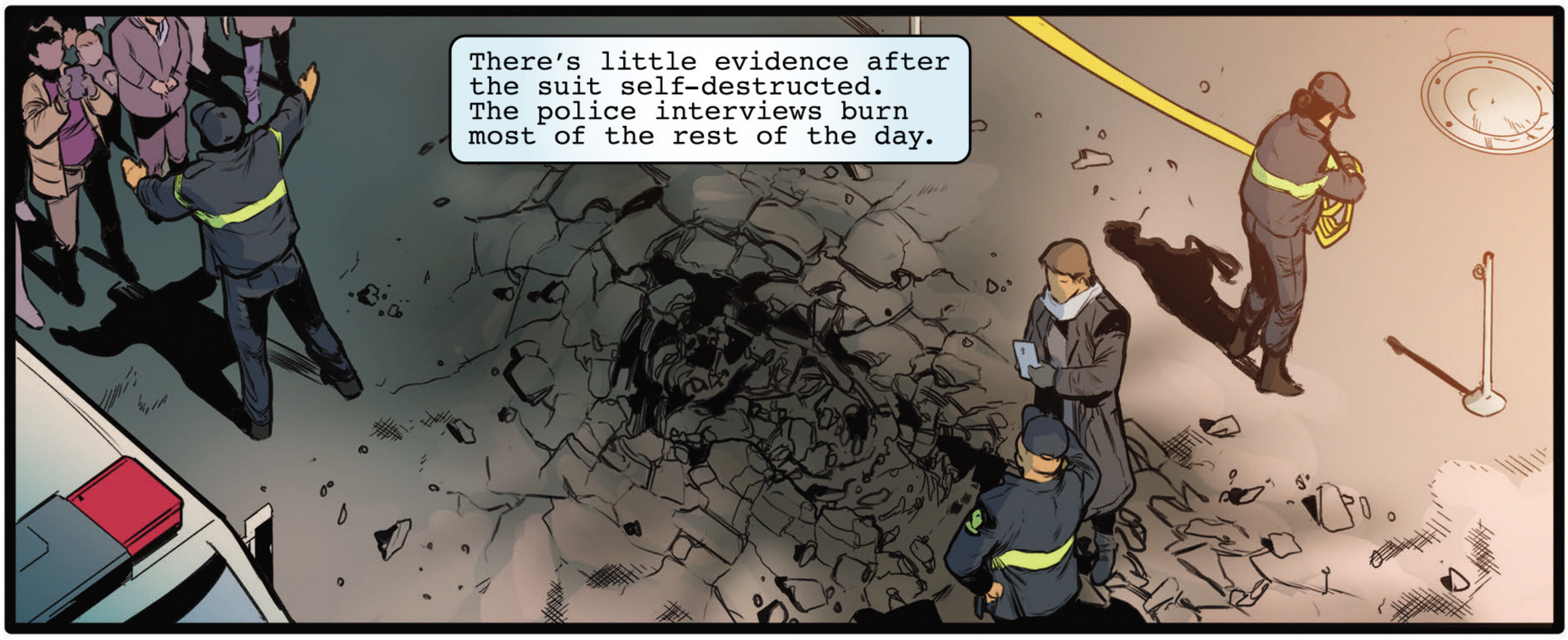

B.O.S.S., CALL EMS!


Facial recognition identifies him as the owner of a messenger service by the name of Elliot Buoncristiano. He was **kidnapped** two days ago.
He's sedated and intubated and was clearly meant to be my next "victim."
SCANS INDICATE THE PADDING IN THE SUIT IS ACTUALLY <PLASTIC EXPLOSIVE.>
JAM ALL SIGNALS! HOW LONG DO I HAVE?
SECONDS.
TIME TO FLY!
BADOOM!!
SET A COURSE FOR THE CLOSEST HOSPITAL!

I almost hit that armor with everything I had. Insinuating I had an improper relationship with Riri almost sealed the deal.


And this poor kidnapped man was supposed to **die.**


Don't kill the messenger, huh?
PETROPLUS
DUFTY & CO.
STARK UNLIMIT.
MARCOR
AXIS BANK
FINANCES
38,03%
30,45%
10,23%
50,60%
48,03%
I may have saved this man, but the Stark Unlimited stock price seems beyond help.


There's little evidence after the suit self-destructed. The police interviews burn most of the rest of the day.

I **really** liked this place.
I swing by with some Chinese and root beer to say goodbye.
After today, I'm sure somebody is gunning for me.
This was no accident.

LITTERING #$%&!

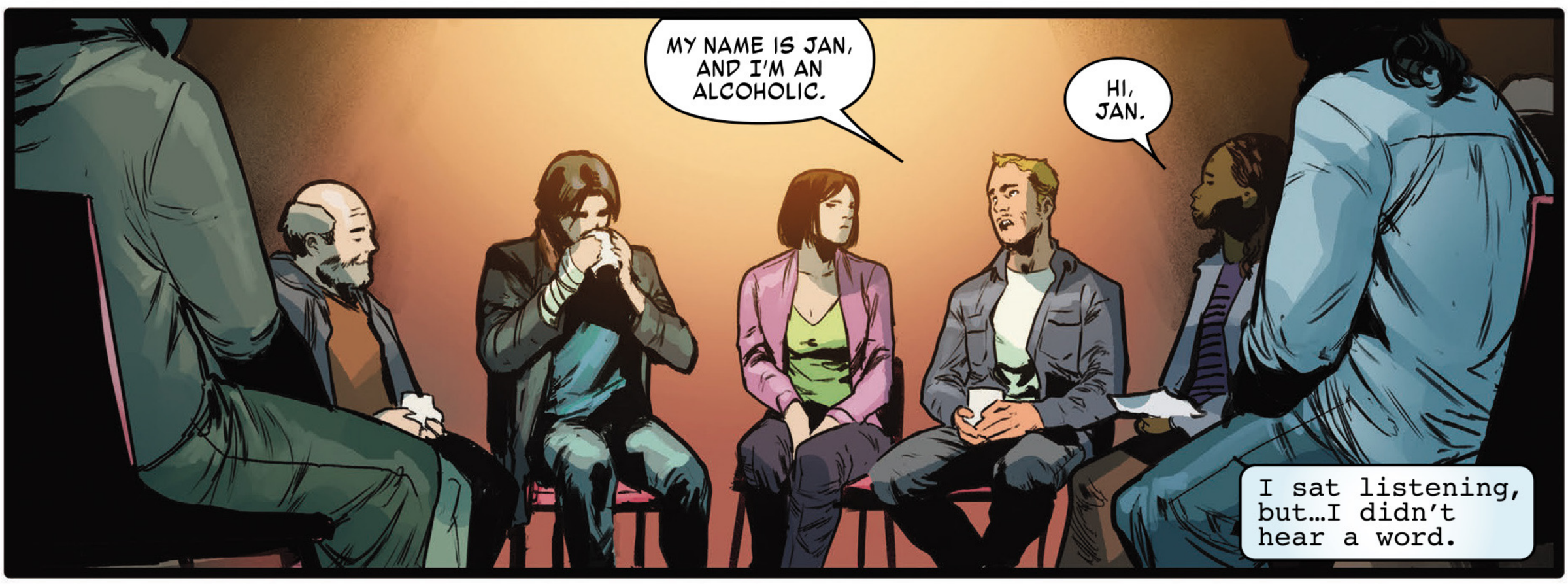
EXCUSE ME, THIS IS THE ***STARK MUSEUM OF LITTER.*** MAIN ATTRACTION: ***MY LIFE.***

AND IT WILL ALL BE CLEANED UP AND SOLD OFF TOMORROW.

When the chips are down, the best thing an addict can do is stick to the plan.
A.A.

Good habits are good. Bad habits are bad.
Coffee

CREAM OR SUGAR?
NO, THANKS.


MY NAME IS JAN, AND I'M AN ALCOHOLIC.
HI, JAN.
I sat listening, but…I didn't hear a word.

Everyone around me is at risk until I find the person trying to kill me.
I ducked out a few minutes early. I wasn't even sure where my legs were taking me. That's dangerous...

...bad habits are bad. I wake up in the men's room.
McALEXANDER'S PUB

Not sure how I ended up inside.
What is happening to me?

It's humbling when you suit up, do your best, and it all goes wrong...

...and you end up flat on your ass, and there's not a damn thing you can do about it.

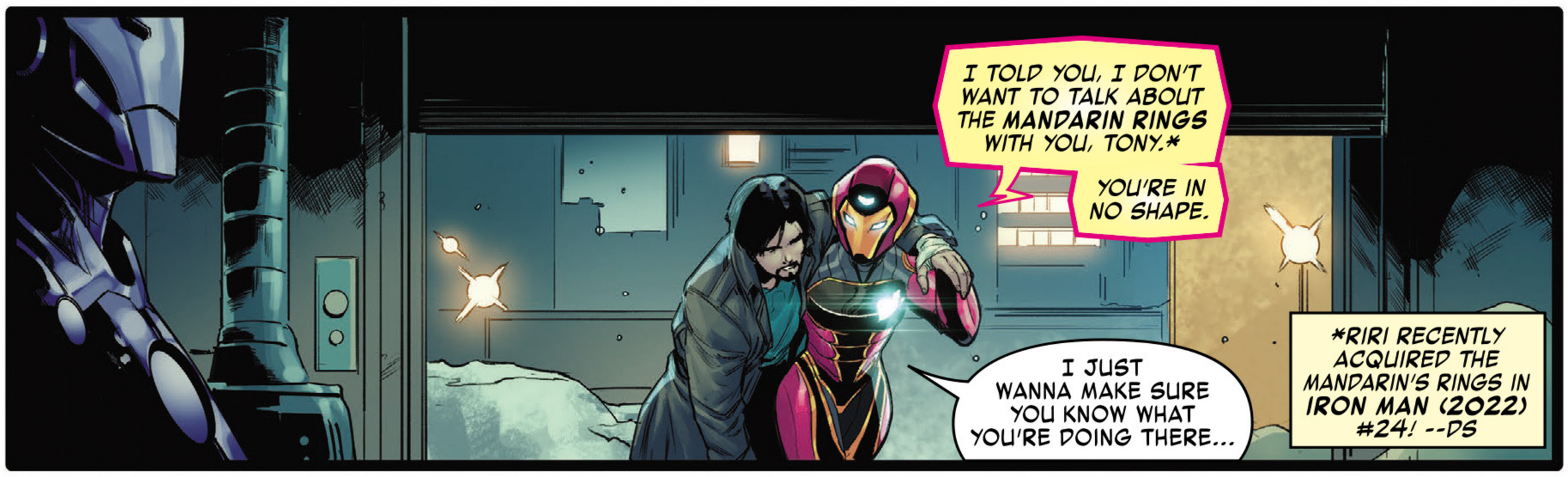
UGHN...

When you're a guy like me with a disease... you just gotta put one foot in front of the other and keep going.
DUDE-- IS THAT TONY STARK?
HUURK.
IT IS HIM!
I'm not done fighting. Not by a long shot. I just... I...

...NEED HELP.

TWO

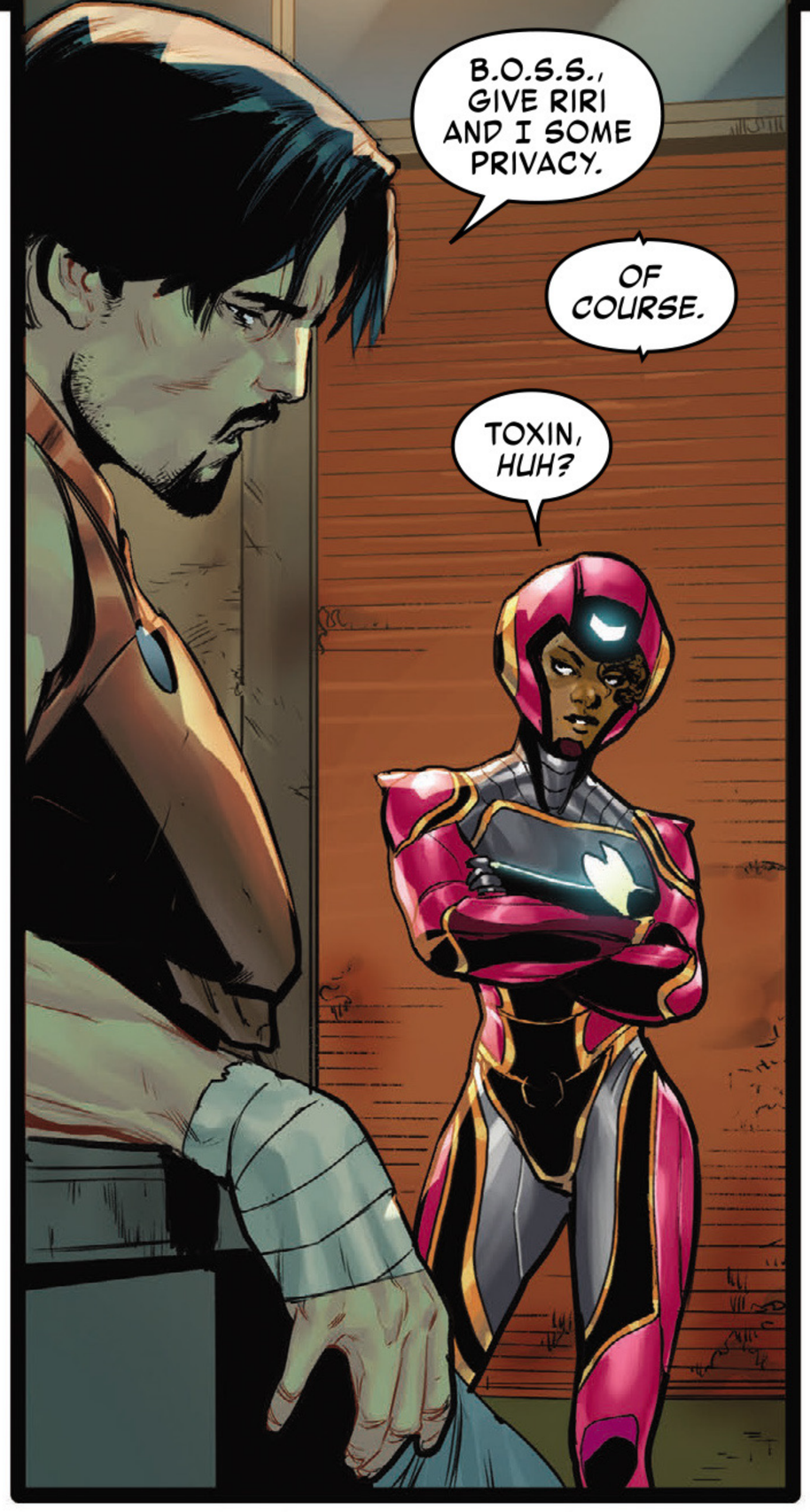
I've been in the gutter before but never quite as literally as I am now in Hell's Kitchen.
Some days, the bright lights in the tunnel vision are a train…
…but tonight, they're my hero, **Ironheart.**
TONY, TONY, TONY...YOU'RE NOT WHO I EXPECTED TO SEE AS THE NUMBER ONE TIKTOK TREND TONIGHT.
RIRI, I DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT IS, BUT IT SOUNDS AWFUL.
YOU NEVER WANT TO BE THE INTERNET'S MAIN CHARACTER. SPEAKING OF "NOT GOOD," YOUR HEART IS ARRHYTHMIC. I'M GETTING YOU TO A HOSPITAL.
NO! NOT A HOSPITAL... GET ME TO THE ***ARMOR.***


I TOLD YOU, I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT THE MANDARIN RINGS WITH YOU, TONY.*
YOU'RE IN NO SHAPE.
I JUST WANNA MAKE SURE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING THERE...
*RIRI RECENTLY ACQUIRED THE MANDARIN'S RINGS IN IRON MAN (2022) #24! --DS

...IT'S GONE BADLY FOR EVERYBODY WHO WEARS THEM.
YEAH, WELL, I'M NOT EVERYBODY.

B.O.S.S., LOOK AT MY HEART. IT CAN'T KEEP A BEAT RIGHT NOW.
PACEMAKER <ACTIVATED.>

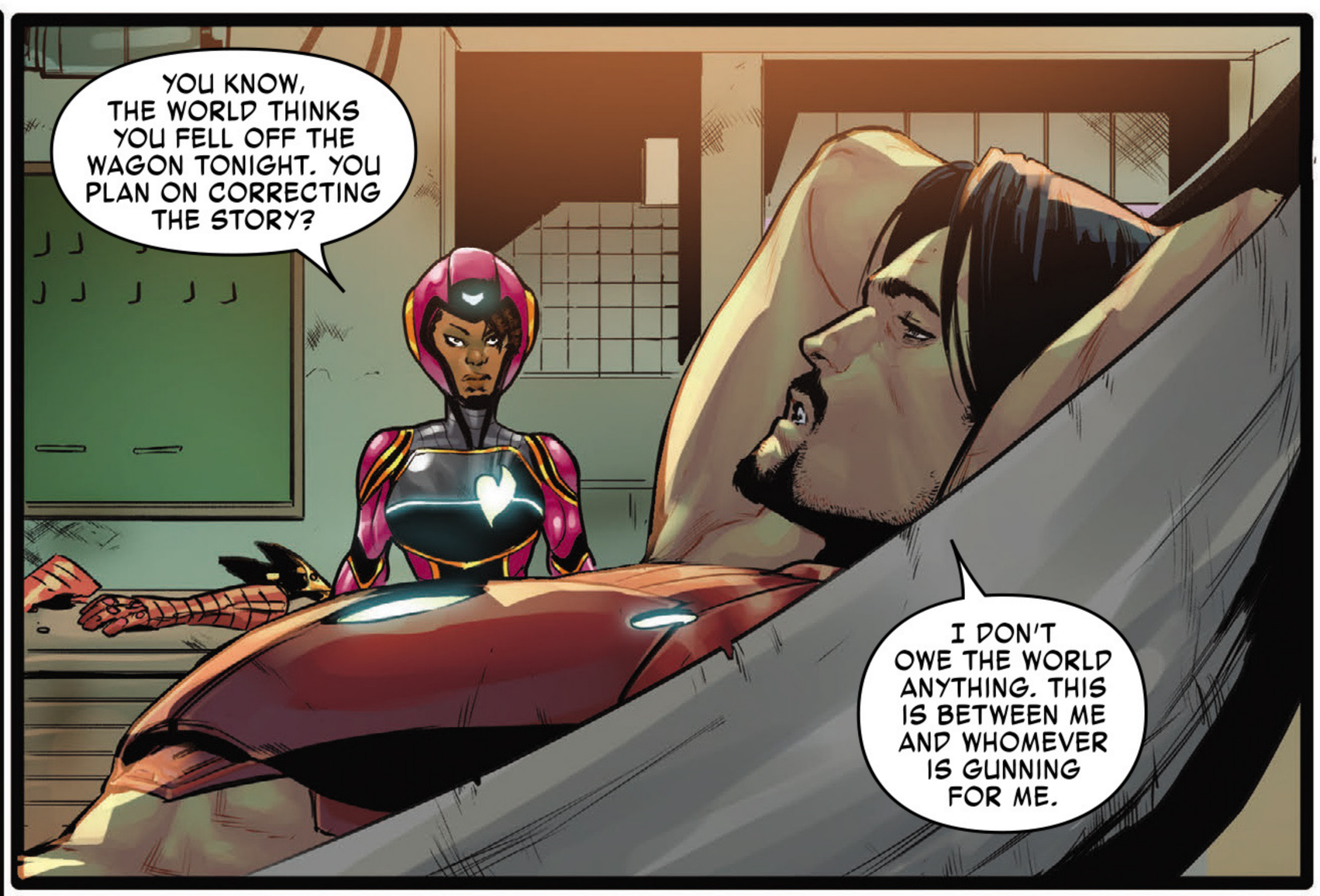
<TOXIN> DETECTED. DEPLOYING COUNTER-MEASURES.
SUGGESTED COURSE OF ACTION: A HOSPITAL WILL--


B.O.S.S., GIVE RIRI AND I SOME PRIVACY.
OF COURSE.
TOXIN, HUH?

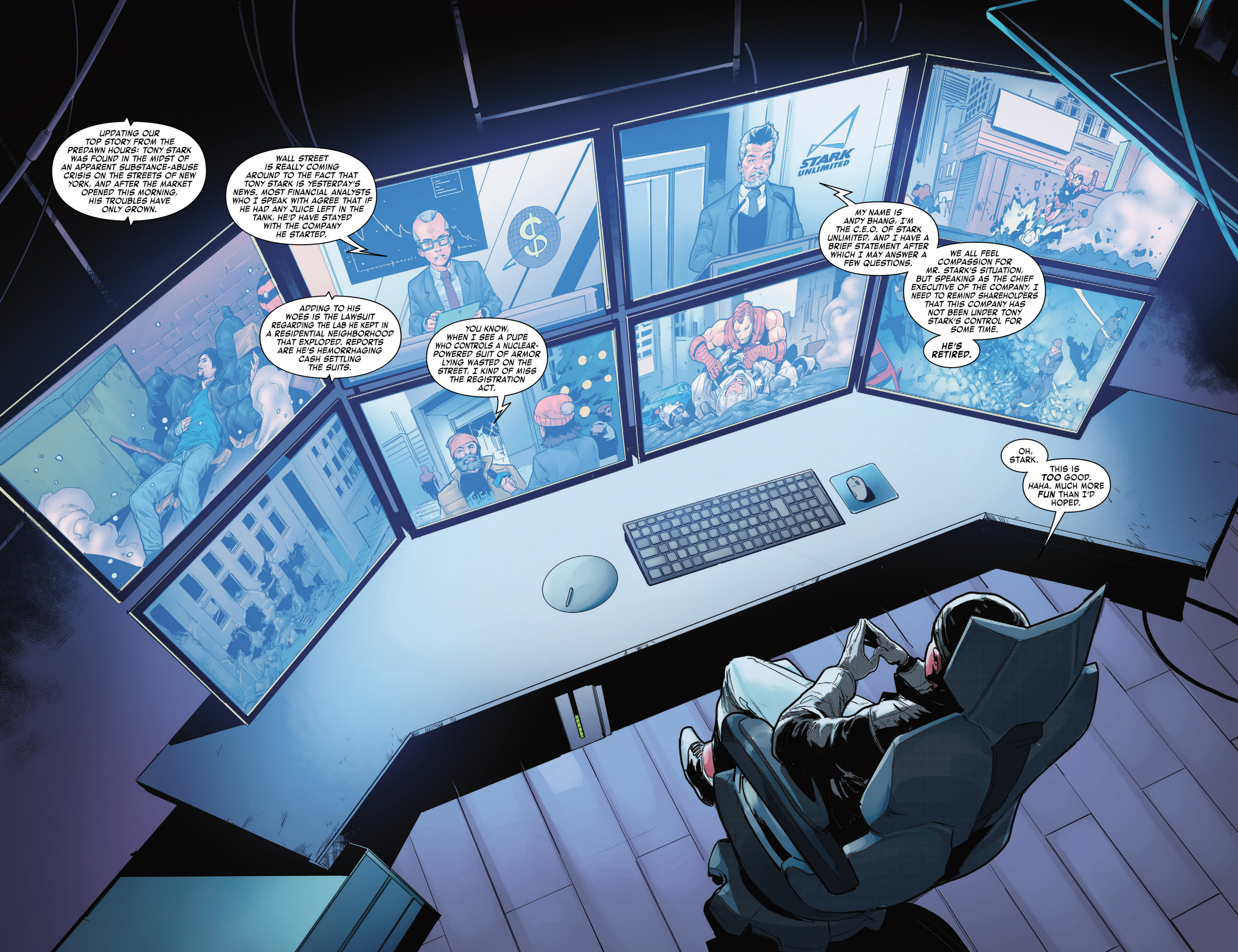
SO...THIS IS THE NEW HOME OF IRON MAN?
NOBODY DECLUTTERS LIKE TONY STARK.

YOU KNOW WHAT I DID WITH THE MONEY--I BOUGHT UP A LOT OF WEAPONS AND DOOMSDAY MACHINES THAT WOULD BE OUT WREAKING HAVOC.
THERE'S PLENTY OF ROOM FOR SOME DANGEROUS OLD RINGS IN THAT WAREHOUSE, RIRI.

NO DICE.
BESIDES, I DON'T ROLL OUT WEARING THE NEW WILLIAMS FAMILY JEWELS WITHOUT IT BEING A SPECIAL OCCASION. TRUST ME, THEY'RE IN A SAFE LOCATION.


YOU KNOW, THE WORLD THINKS YOU FELL OFF THE WAGON TONIGHT. YOU PLAN ON CORRECTING THE STORY?
I DON'T OWE THE WORLD ANYTHING. THIS IS BETWEEN ME AND WHOMEVER IS GUNNING FOR ME.

JUST... NEED... SLEEP.
"GOOD MORNING, NEW YORK. HERE'S THE NEWS..."


UPDATING OUR TOP STORY FROM THE PREDAWN HOURS: TONY STARK WAS FOUND IN THE MIDST OF AN APPARENT SUBSTANCE-ABUSE CRISIS ON THE STREETS OF NEW YORK, AND AFTER THE MARKET OPENED THIS MORNING, HIS TROUBLES HAVE ONLY GROWN.
WALL STREET IS REALLY COMING AROUND TO THE FACT THAT TONY STARK IS YESTERDAY'S NEWS. MOST FINANCIAL ANALYSTS WHO I SPEAK WITH AGREE THAT IF HE HAD ANY JUICE LEFT IN THE TANK, HE'D HAVE STAYED WITH THE COMPANY HE STARTED.
ADDING TO HIS WOES IS THE LAWSUIT REGARDING THE LAB HE KEPT IN A RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD THAT EXPLODED. REPORTS ARE HE'S HEMORRHAGING CASH SETTLING THE SUITS.
YOU KNOW, WHEN I SEE A DUDE WHO CONTROLS A NUCLEAR-POWERED SUIT OF ARMOR LYING WASTED ON THE STREET, I KIND OF MISS THE REGISTRATION ACT.
STARK UNLIMITED
MY NAME IS ANDY BHANG, I'M THE C.E.O. OF STARK UNLIMITED, AND I HAVE A BRIEF STATEMENT AFTER WHICH I MAY ANSWER A FEW QUESTIONS.
WE ALL FEEL COMPASSION FOR MR. STARK'S SITUATION, BUT SPEAKING AS THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE COMPANY, I NEED TO REMIND SHAREHOLDERS THAT THIS COMPANY HAS NOT BEEN UNDER TONY STARK'S CONTROL FOR SOME TIME.
HE'S RETIRED.
OH, STARK.
THIS IS TOO GOOD. HAHA. MUCH MORE FUN THAN I'D HOPED.

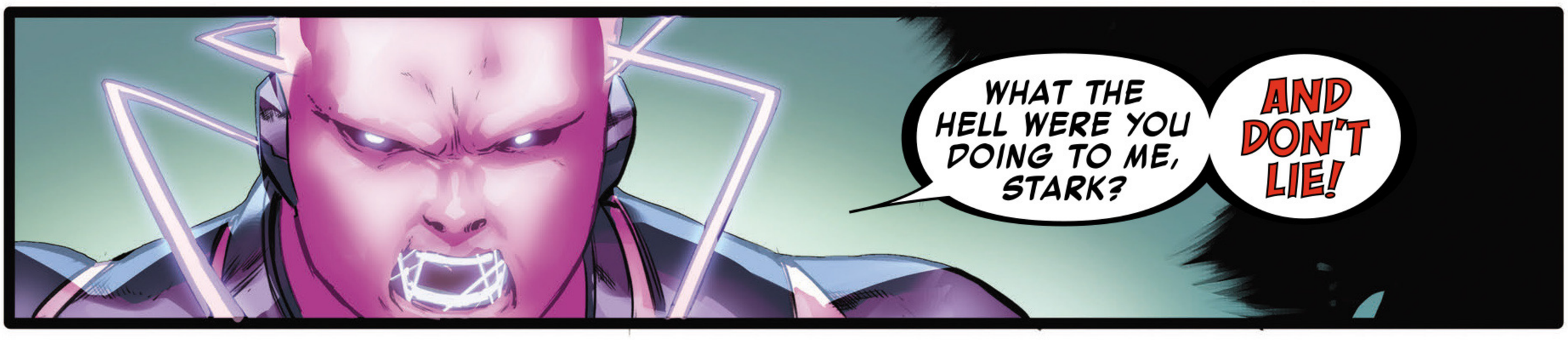
TONY STARK HAS COMPLETELY DIVESTED FROM THE COMPANY. HE HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH STARK UNLIMITED, AND NEITHER DOES HIS CREATION, IRON MAN.
STARK UNLIMITED
SKRAAB-OOM!
WHERE IS MY JAILER--
--WHERE IS TONY STARK?!

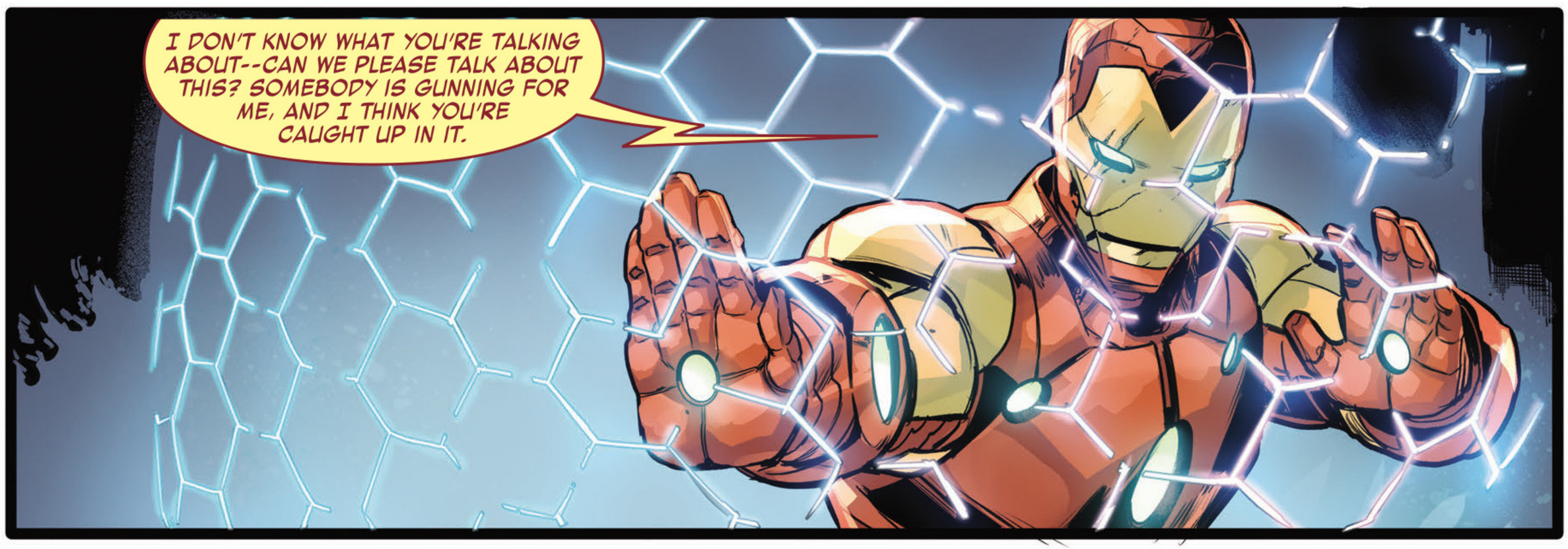
HE'S RETIRED.
I AM NOT RETIRED. HOW DARE HE?
YOU'RE LITERALLY IN A HAMMOCK, OLD MAN.
STARK UNLIMITED
IS THAT THE LIVING LASER?
YEP. SURE LOOKS LIKE IT. I BET THEY TRY TO BLAME THIS ON ME TOO.
WHERE IS TONY STARK?!
CAN'T IMAGINE WHY.
GOTTA SUIT UP.
UGHN.
GRRR.
AARGH!
HELP ME OUT OF THIS HAMMOCK?

By necessity, when I create, I need to be alone. That's why Tony Stark has often lived such a solitary life.
It's Iron Man who seems to attract all the friends.
That's weird, right?
Not that I'm not grateful for Riri, Rhodes and the Avengers when it's time to put the armor into action.
THE LIVING LASER ISN'T TO BE UNDERESTIMATED.
EVEN THOUGH HIS NAME IS "THE LIVING LASER"?
...
YES.
9-1-1 CALLS ARE COMING IN FROM THE OLD AVENGERS MANSION.
ISN'T THIS PLACE A THEME HOTEL NOW?
YEAH, LOTS OF CIVILIANS PROBABLY TOO.
LET'S NOT MAKE THE NEWS.
I THINK THAT'LL BE MY NEW BATTLE CRY.

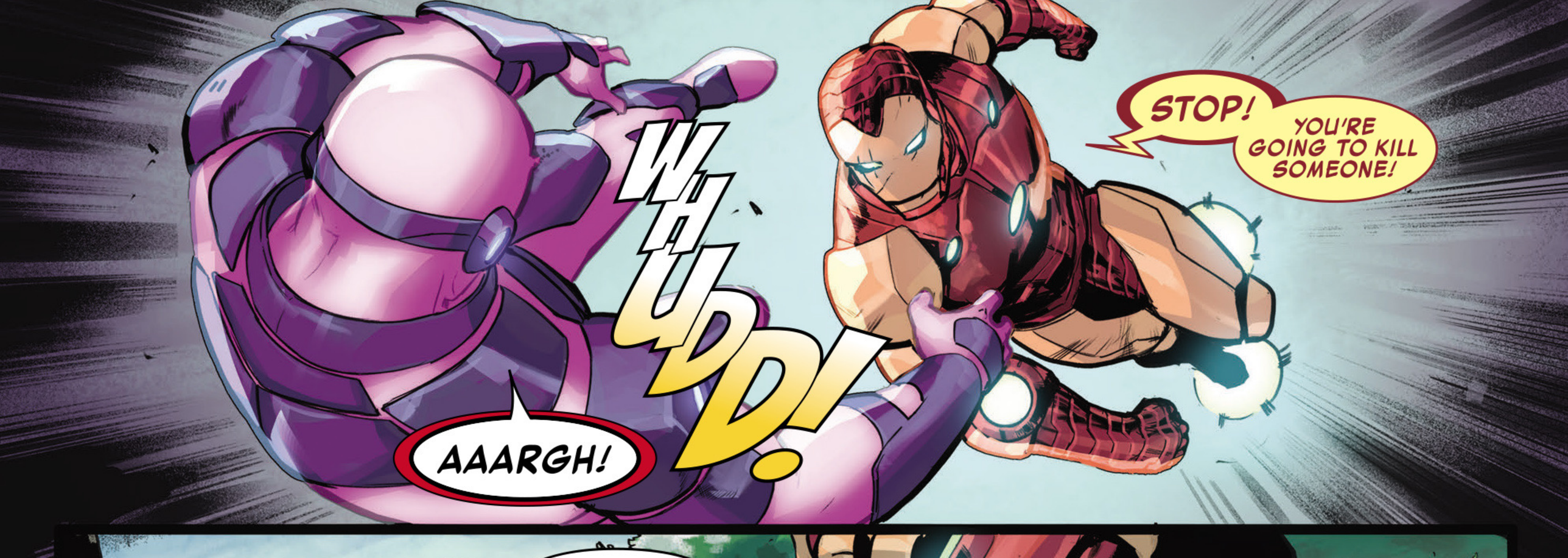
FWASH!
"EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES," MY ASS!

THAT'S JUST RUDE, ARTHUR PARKS.
I DON'T HAVE A LOT OF STATUES.
YOU DON'T HAVE ANY OTHER STATUES.
I THINK THAT'S HIS LINE.

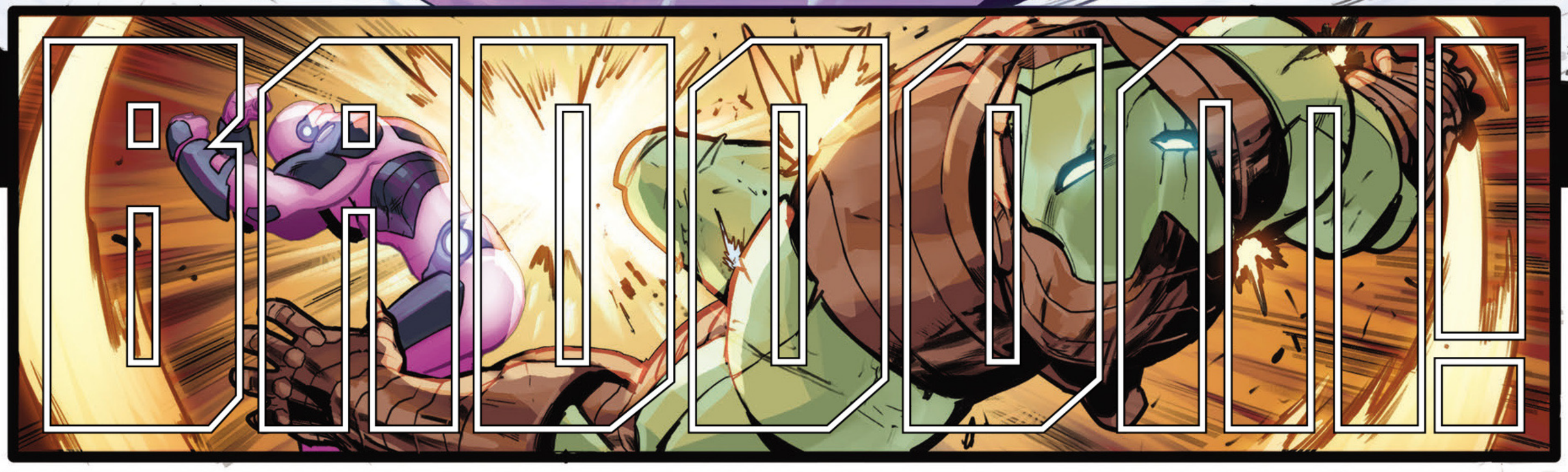

WHAT THE HELL WERE YOU DOING TO ME, STARK?
AND DON'T LIE!


I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT--CAN WE PLEASE TALK ABOUT THIS? SOMEBODY IS GUNNING FOR ME, AND I THINK YOU'RE CAUGHT UP IN IT.

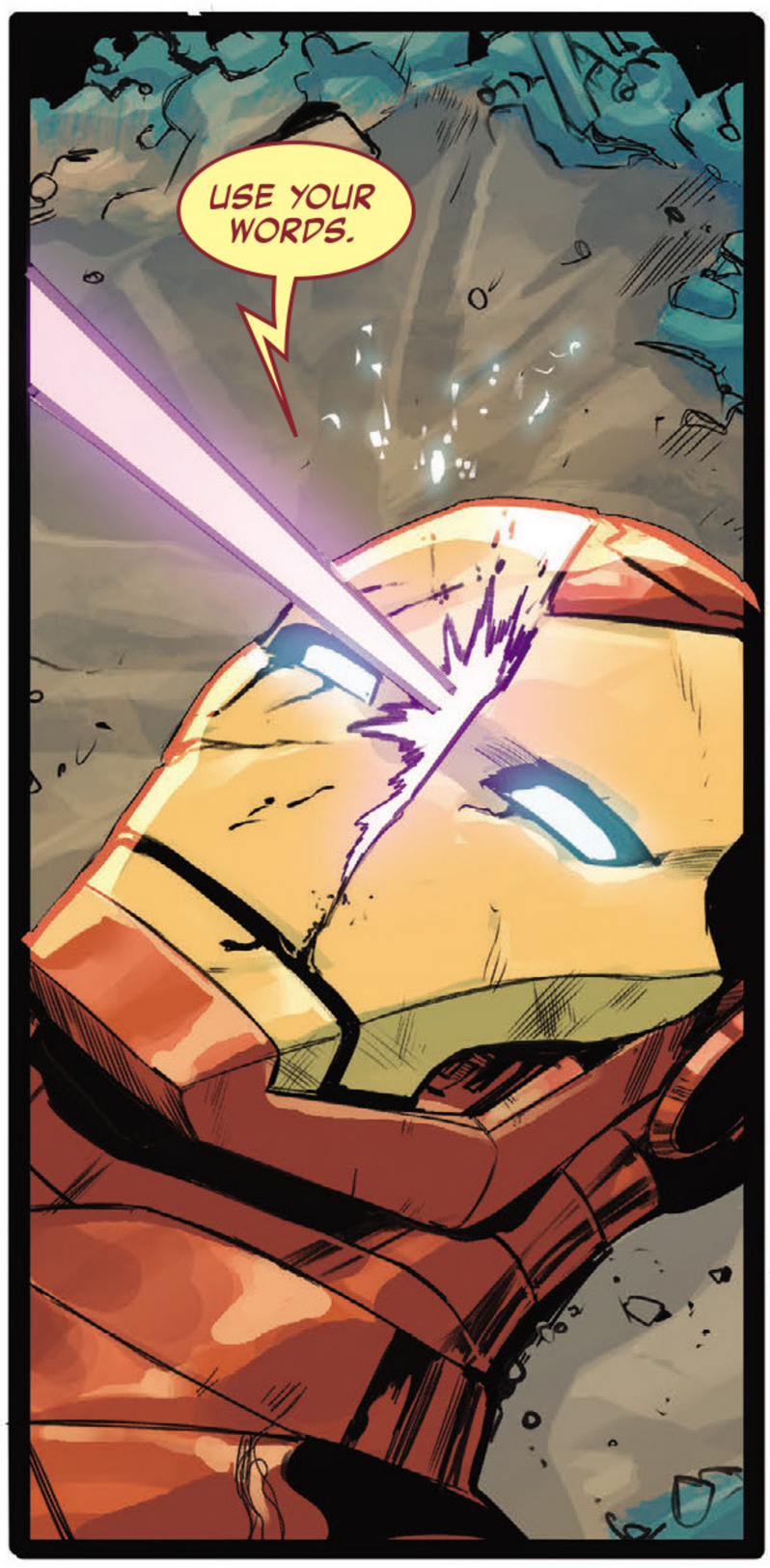
VERY FUNNY!
SAYING "CAUGHT UP IN IT" TO A GUY YOU CAPTURED AND EXPERIMENTED ON. REAL CUTE.
AARGH!
KRS
WHOA!
ZZT
ZZT
ZZT


WHUDD!
AAARGH!
STOP!
YOU'RE GOING TO KILL SOMEONE!

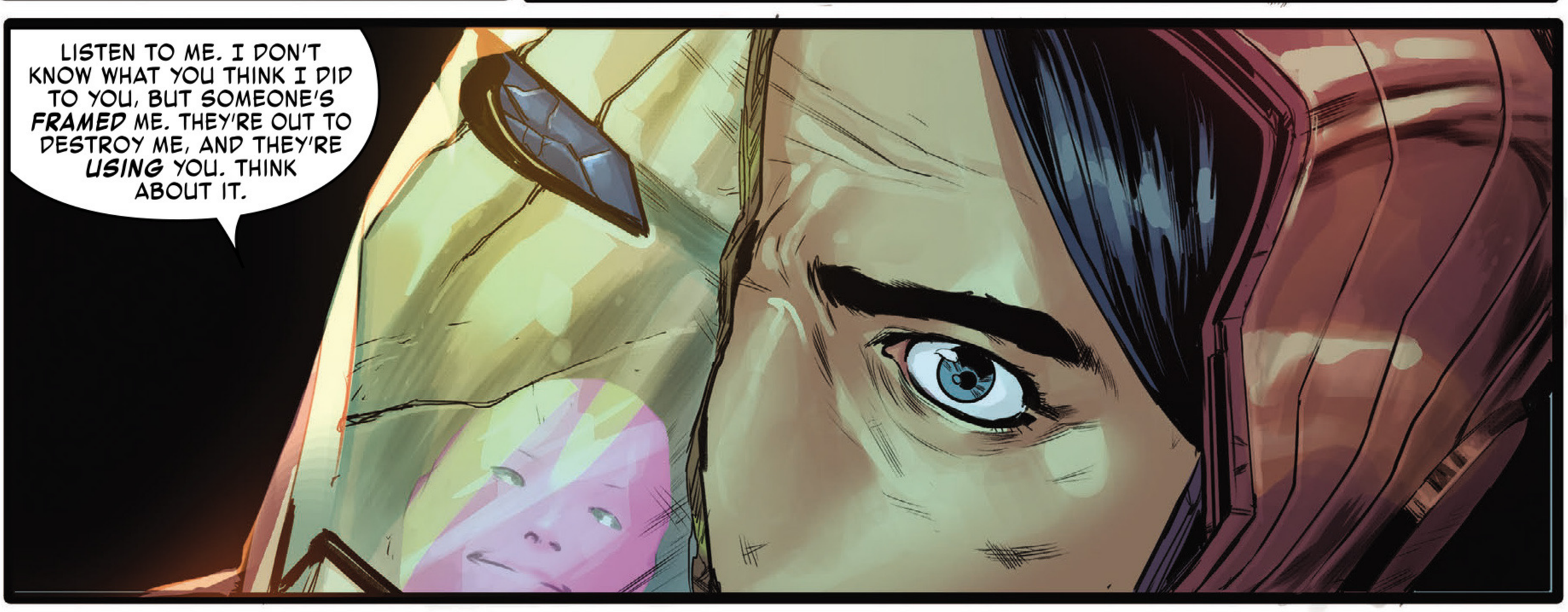
YEAH-- YOU!
YOU WERE ALWAYS A SMUG #$%&, BUT I NEVER TOOK YOU FOR A MAD SCIENTIST, STARK...
...BUT MAYBE ALL THAT MONEY AND POWER JUST MADE YOU CRAZY.
ZARK!
BWEEM!


BLAMMM

WERE YOU HOPING TO ADD MY POWER TO THAT SUIT?
WELL, YOU'RE NOT GONNA HAVE IT FOR LONG.
SKRAZZZ!
ARTHUR, STOP!

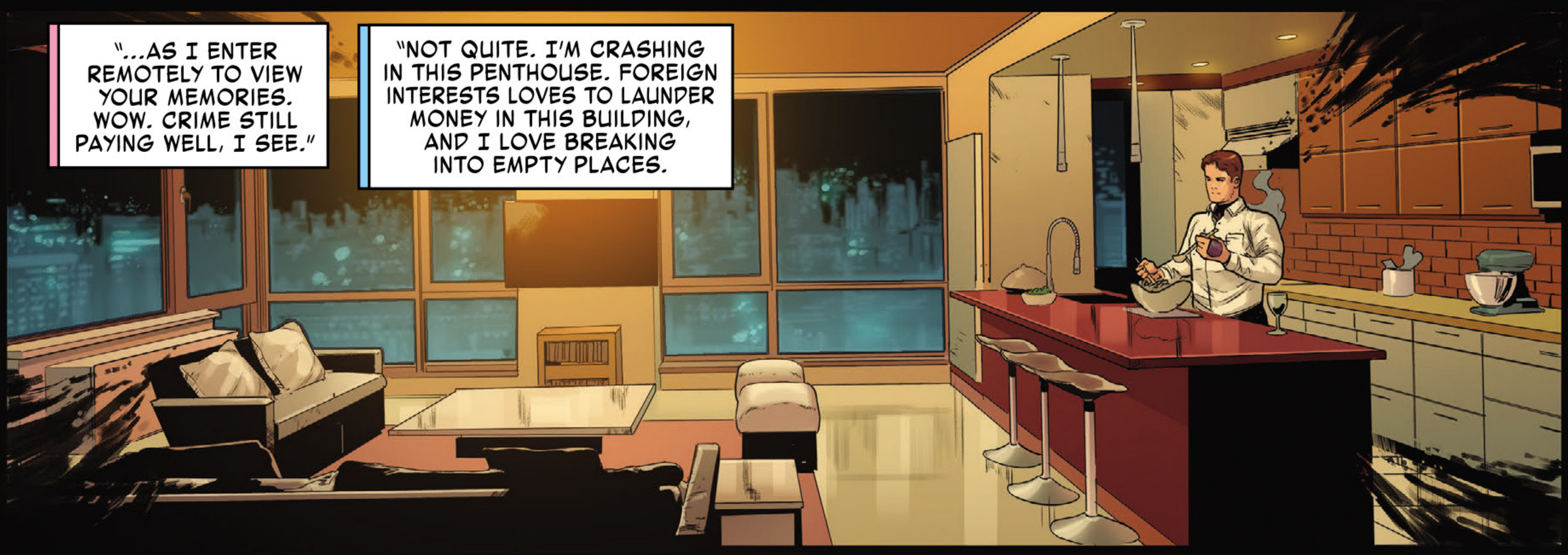

USE YOUR WORDS.

WHO NEEDS WORDS WHEN YOU CAN USE *LASERS?*
B.O.S.S., GIVE ME WEAPONS!
POWER LEVELS MINIMAL.
WHAT DO WE HAVE? POSTMATES? CAN WE ORDER TAKEOUT TO ENTICE NEGOTIATIONS?


LISTEN TO ME. I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU THINK I DID TO YOU, BUT SOMEONE'S *FRAMED* ME. THEY'RE OUT TO DESTROY ME, AND THEY'RE *USING* YOU. THINK ABOUT IT.

HOW'RE YOUR RIBS, ARTIE?
KRAK!
UNGH!
I GUESS IF I'M GONNA KILL ONE ARMORED IDIOT, WHY NOT TWO?
AND DON'T CALL ME "ARTIE."
BZZZZT!
YOW!
THAT'S IT.
OKAY...NOW THE GLOVES COME OFF.
RIRI-- WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

YOU WILL STOP.
YES, I WILL STOP.
I'M HACKING IN.
INTO WHAT?!
THE LIVING LASER'S MIND.
RIRI-- YOU LIED TO ME.
NO, I DIDN'T. I SAID THE RINGS WERE SAFE AND THEY ARE.
NOW I'M USING THE RINGS TO ENTER YOUR MIND, PARKS.
DO YOURSELF A FAVOR AND DON'T RESIST...

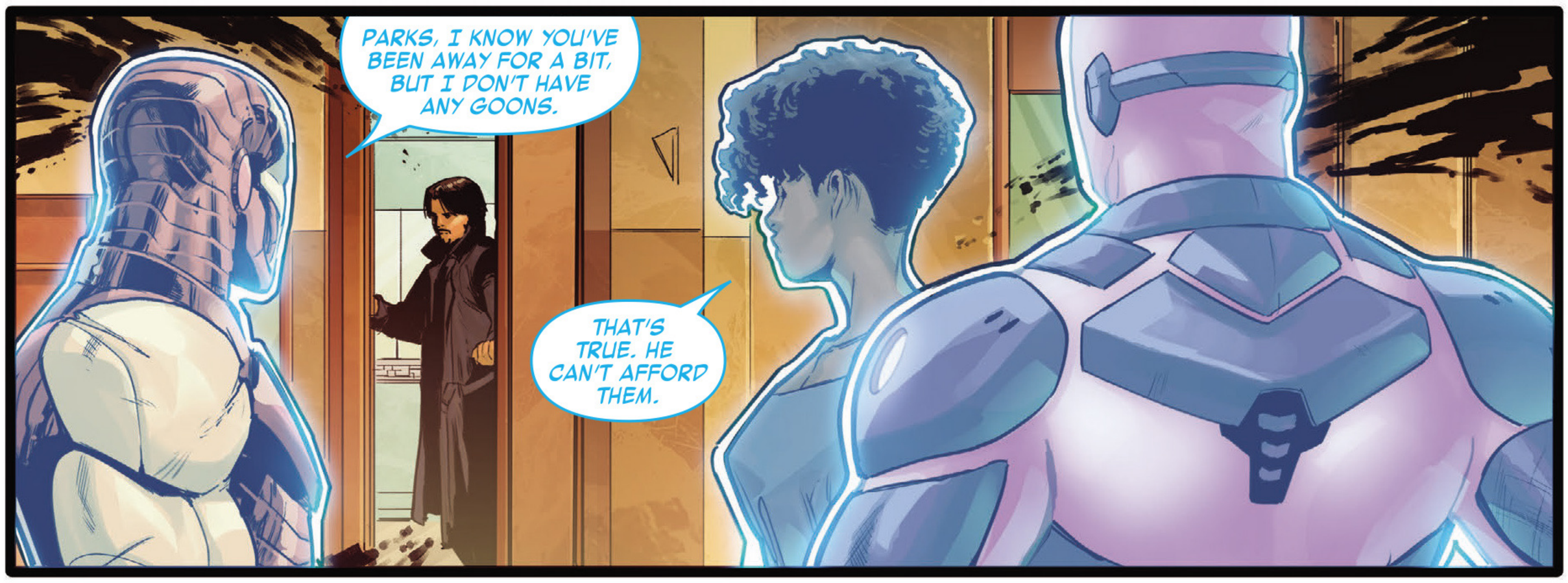

"...AS I ENTER REMOTELY TO VIEW YOUR MEMORIES. WOW. CRIME STILL PAYING WELL, I SEE."
"NOT QUITE. I'M CRASHING IN THIS PENTHOUSE. FOREIGN INTERESTS LOVES TO LAUNDER MONEY IN THIS BUILDING, AND I LOVE BREAKING INTO EMPTY PLACES.

"SO THE LAST THING I REMEMBER BEFORE WAKING UP AT STARK'S COMPANY IS--MAKING DINNER A WEEK AGO, WHEN THERE'S A KNOCK AT MY DOOR. AND NOBODY EVEN KNOWS I'M CRASHING THERE.
NOK NOK!

STARK?!

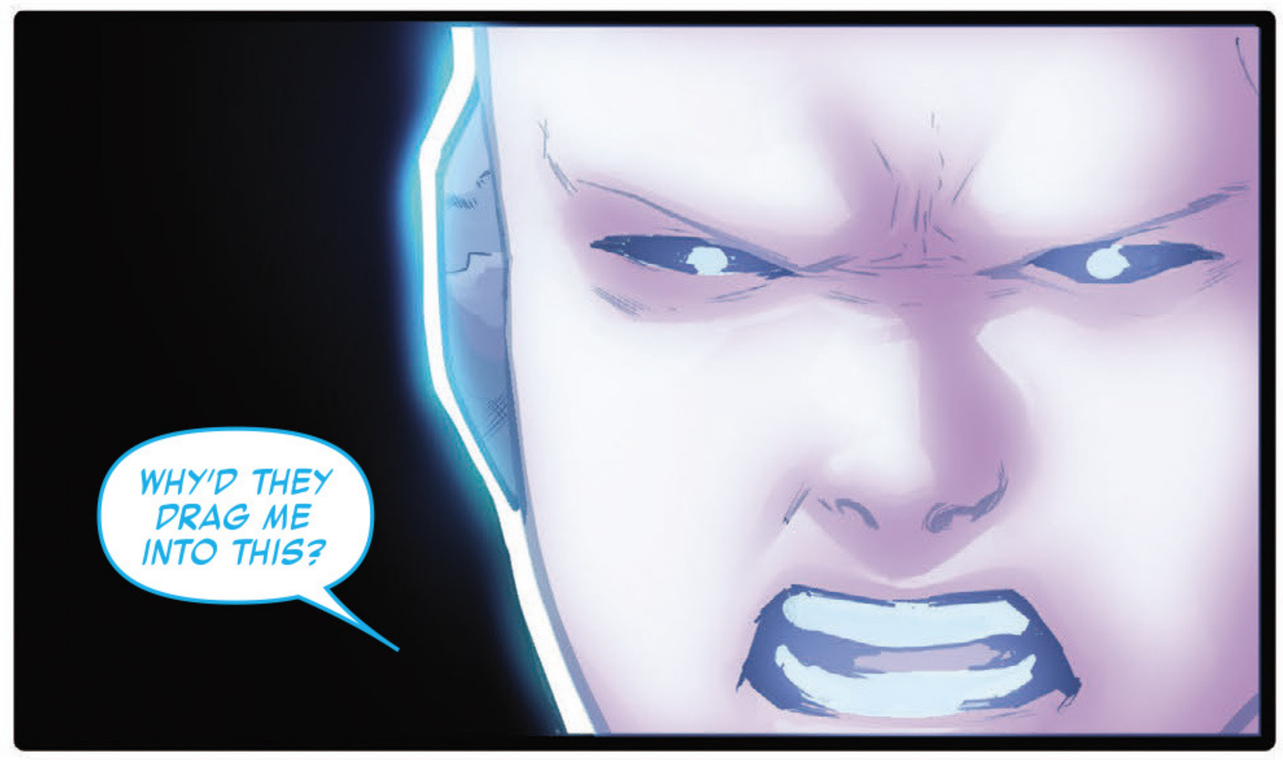
"YOU TAZED ME...

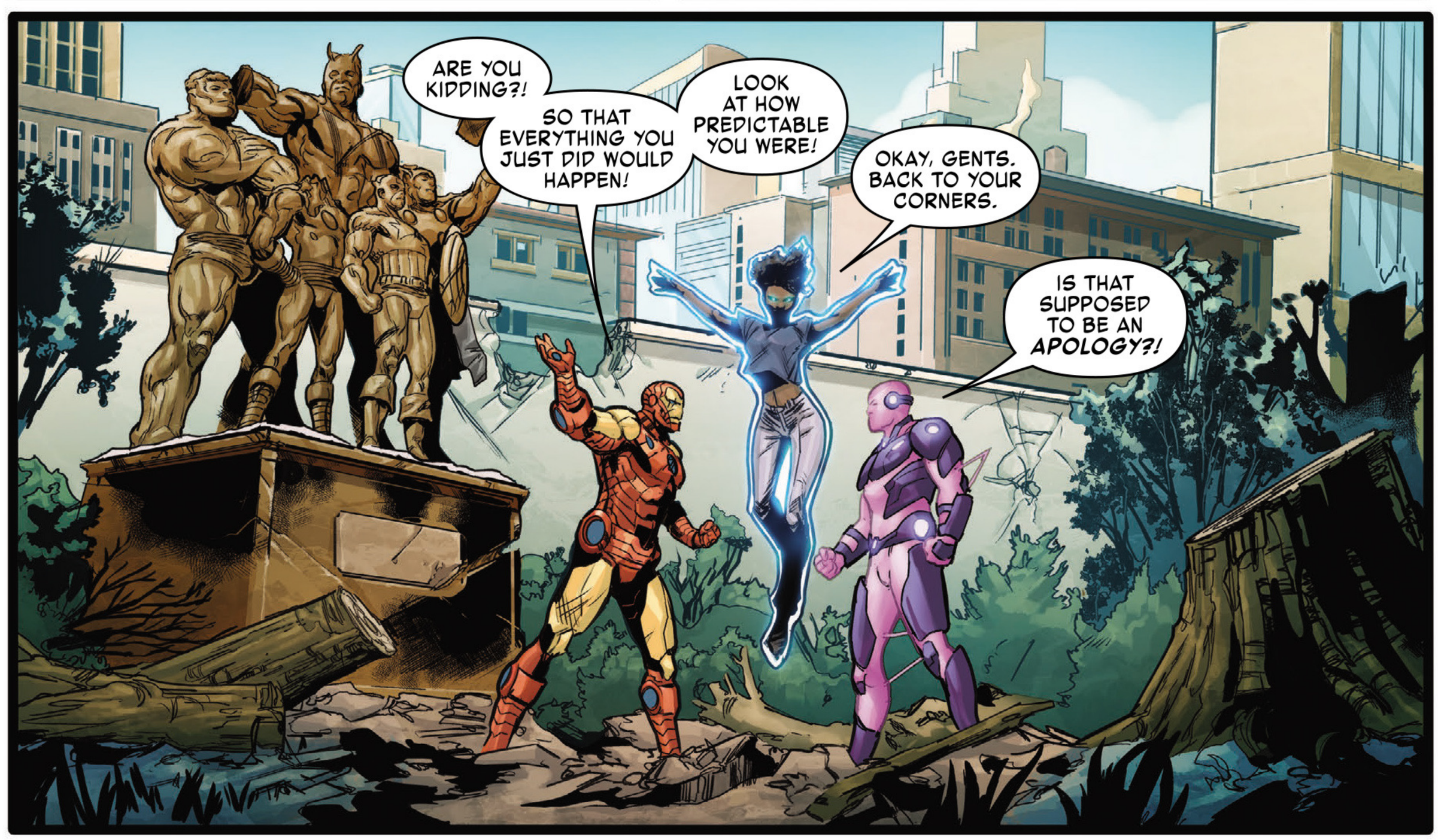
"...THEN YOUR GOONS SEDATED ME, AND I WAS TAKEN TO THAT SECRET LAB AT YOUR COMPANY."

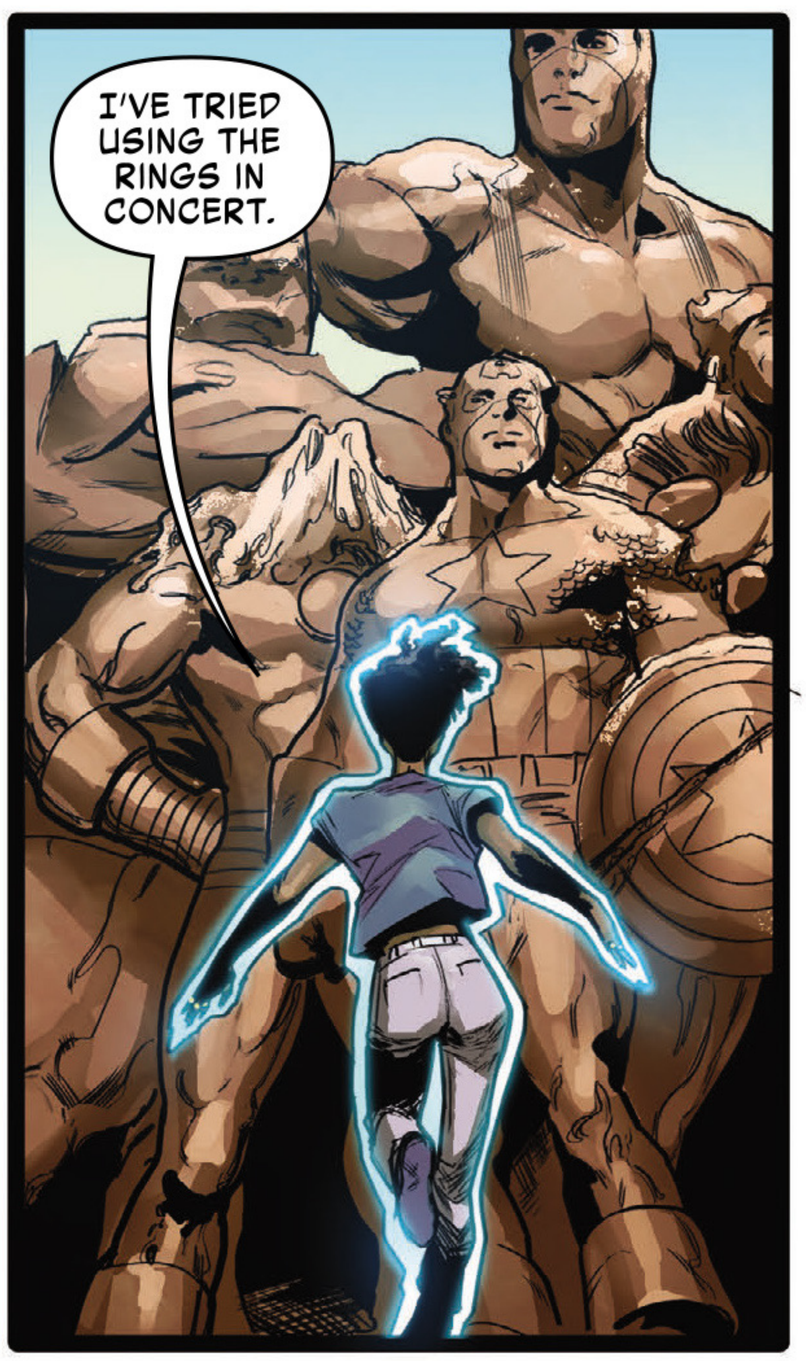

PARKS, I KNOW YOU'VE BEEN AWAY FOR A BIT, BUT I DON'T HAVE ANY GOONS.
THAT'S TRUE. HE CAN'T AFFORD THEM.

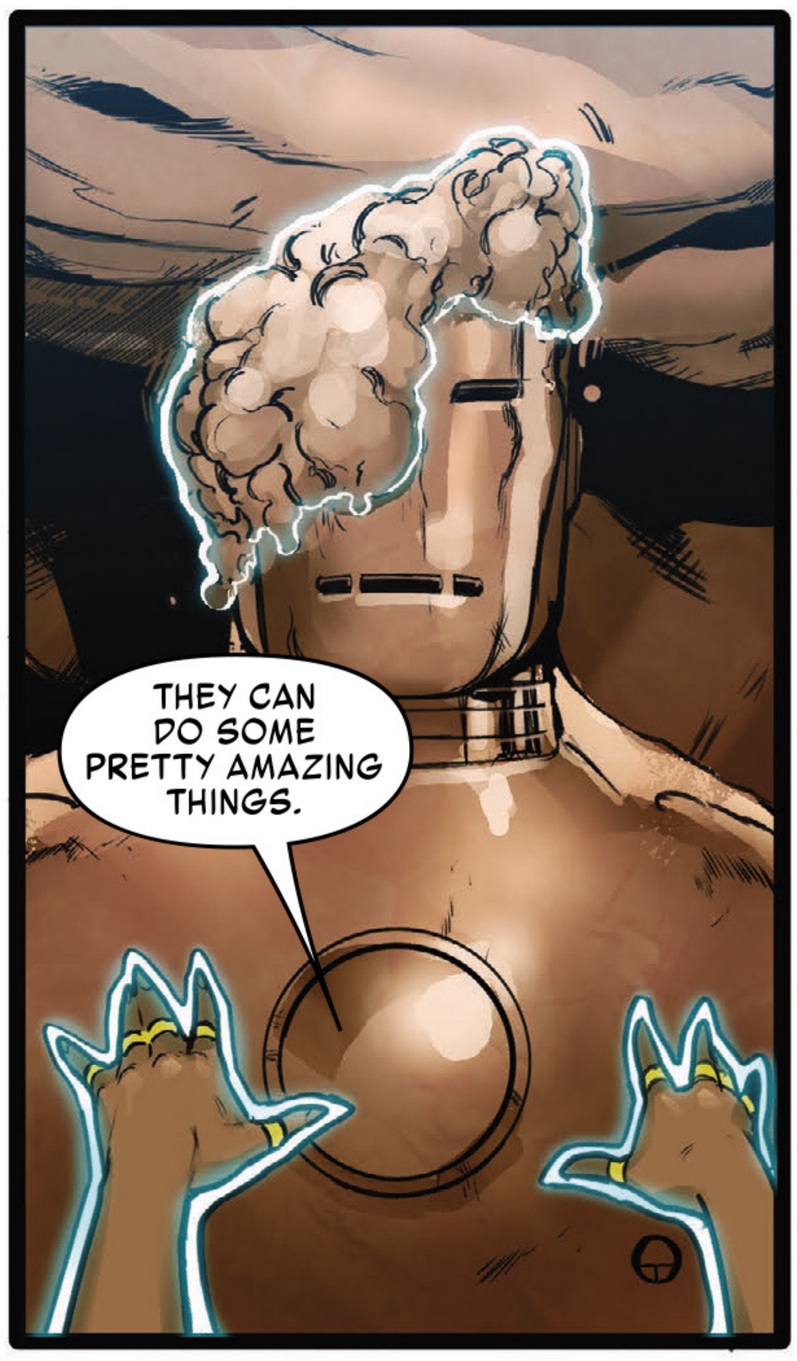
BUT PARKS' MEMORY HASN'T BEEN TAMPERED WITH.
YOU'RE BOTH RIGHT. TONY STARK DID KIDNAP YOU AND RUN EXPERIMENTS ON YOU.
I TOLDJA.

WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT? A LIFE-MODEL DECOY? WORSE?

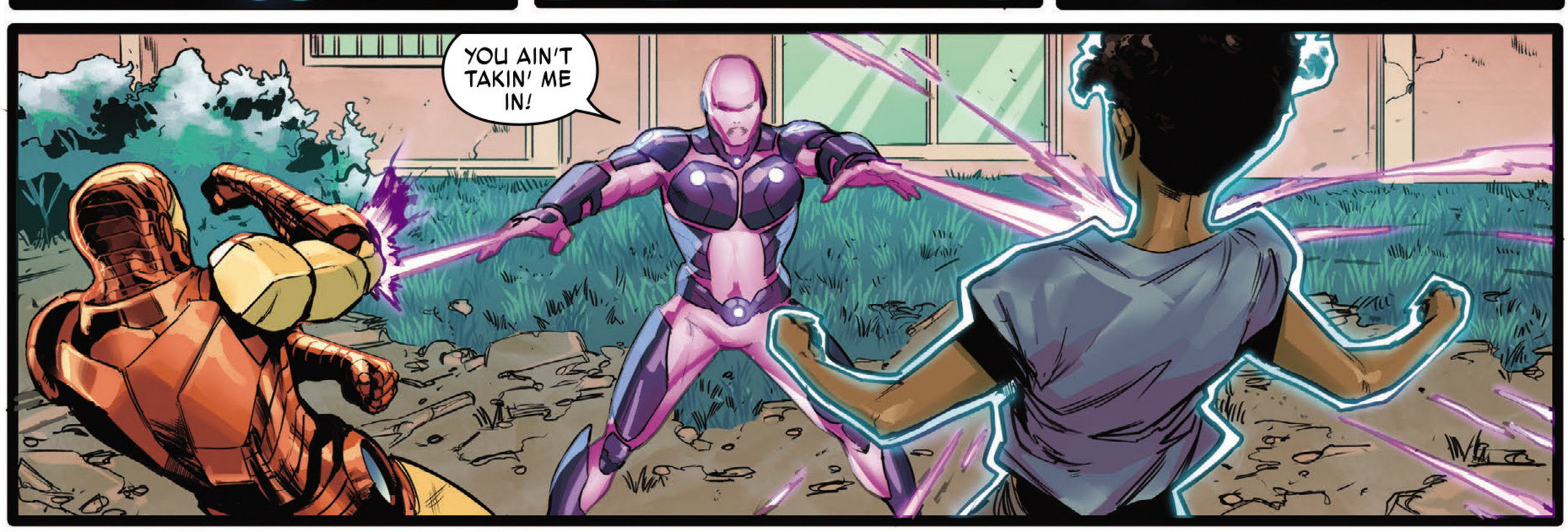

WHY'D THEY DRAG ME INTO THIS?

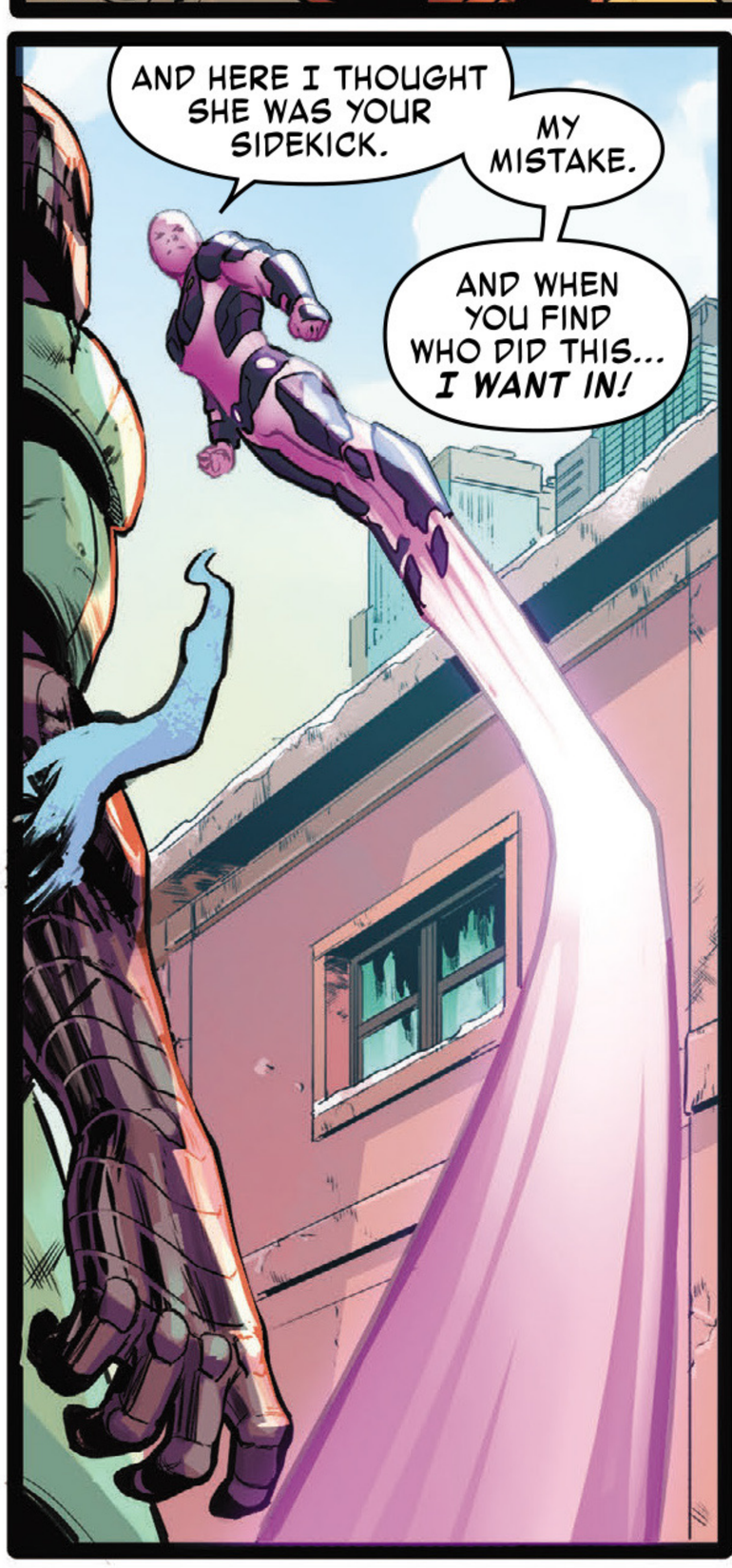

ARE YOU KIDDING?!
SO THAT EVERYTHING YOU JUST DID WOULD HAPPEN!
LOOK AT HOW PREDICTABLE YOU WERE!
OKAY, GENTS. BACK TO YOUR CORNERS.
IS THAT SUPPOSED TO BE AN APOLOGY?!


I'VE TRIED USING THE RINGS IN CONCERT.


THEY CAN DO SOME PRETTY AMAZING THINGS.

NOW ABOUT THE LIVING LASER--


YOU AIN'T TAKIN' ME IN!

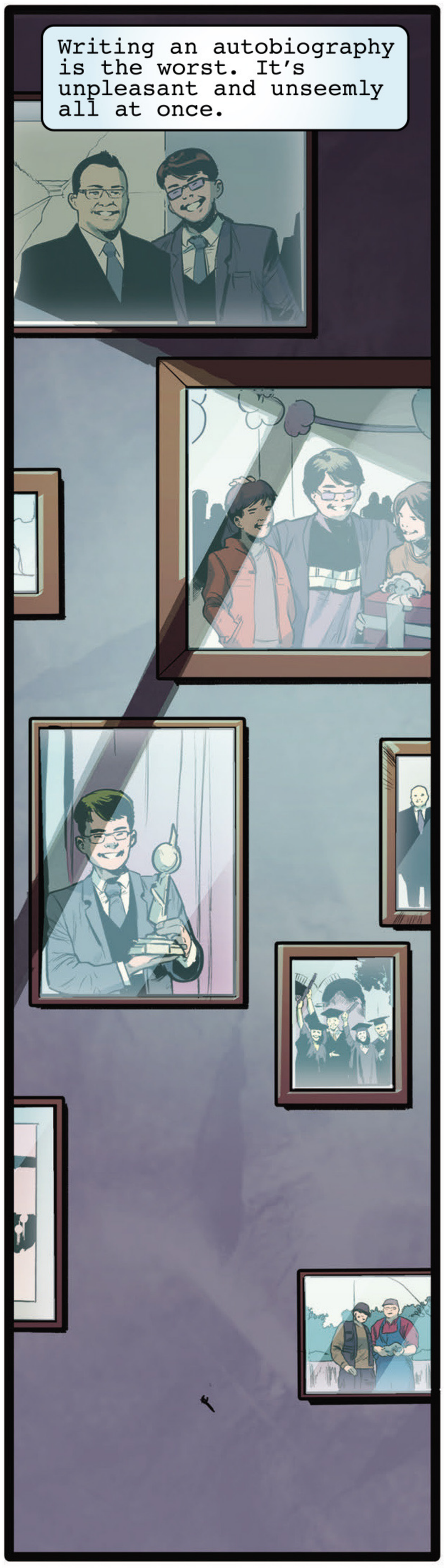

AND HERE I THOUGHT SHE WAS YOUR SIDEKICK.
MY MISTAKE.
AND WHEN YOU FIND WHO DID THIS... I WANT IN!

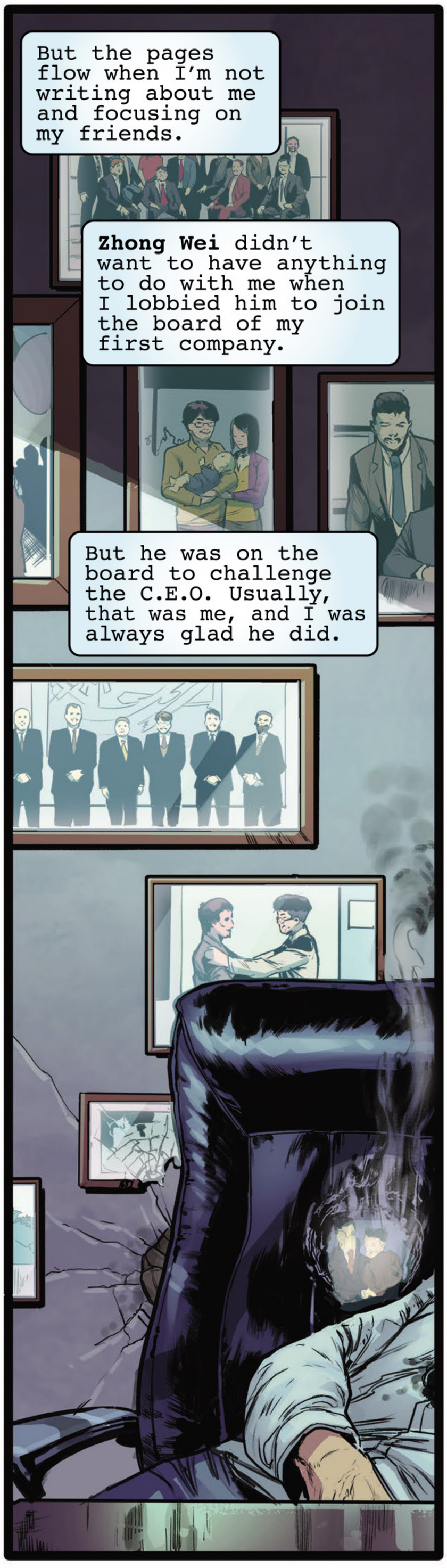
DID HE REALLY JUST ZAP US ONE MORE TIME AND THEN REQUEST A TEAM-UP?
I'D SAY THAT SHOWS A LITTLE PERSONAL GROWTH.

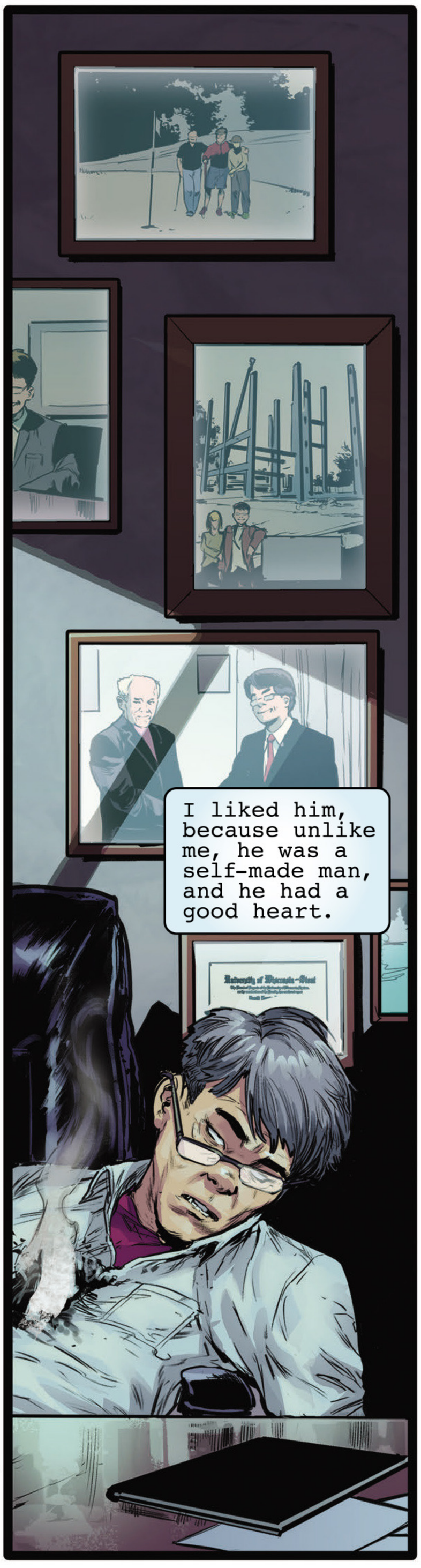
SEEMS HE WAS AN AGGRIEVED PARTY. YOU WANT ME TO CHASE HIM, OR DO YOU NEED A TOW BACK TO YOUR "LIVERY LAIR"?

A LITTLE WHILE LATER, BACK AT STARK'S HIDEOUT.
APPRECIATE THE RIDE HOME.
WE'LL CONTINUE TO AGREE TO DISAGREE ABOUT THE RINGS. IN THE MEANTIME, I NEED YOU TO KEEP A DISTANCE FROM ME. AT LEAST PUBLICLY.
UNTIL WE KNOW EXACTLY WHAT WE'RE DEALING WITH.
ANY IDEA HOW THEY POISONED YOU?
YES.
"AT THE AA MEETING I ATTENDED LAST NIGHT...
"...THAT'S WHERE IT HAPPENED.
"I'M USED TO NEARLY BEING KILLED FOR A LIVING...BUT NOT AT MY DAMN ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS MEETINGS...AND IT MAKES ME VERY ANGRY."
IT'S GOTTA BE ABOUT THE STARK UNLIMITED STOCK PRICE, BUT NONE OF THE OLD NAMES FIT. SO MANY OF THEM--STANE, HAMMER--ALL DEAD.
WELL, BE CAREFUL. AND YELL WHEN YOU NEED ME.
I WILL. AND THANKS. I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO MEETING MY NEXT DEAD NEMESIS.

Whoever is using me to tank the stock doesn't know I have an ace up my gauntlet. A personal friend with enough stock that he's a living poison pill against a hostile takeover.


Writing an autobiography is the worst. It's unpleasant and unseemly all at once.


But the pages flow when I'm not writing about me and focusing on my friends.
Zhong Wei didn't want to have anything to do with me when I lobbied him to join the board of my first company.
But he was on the board to challenge the C.E.O. Usually, that was me, and I was always glad he did.


I liked him, because unlike me, he was a self-made man, and he had a good heart.

As long as he's safely in that seat, I don't have anything to worry about.

THREE:

THE HOME OF ZHONG WEI.
A CRIME SCENE.

As an engineer, I always build redundancies. My boot jets fail? Then my stabilizers have enough thrust to land me safely.

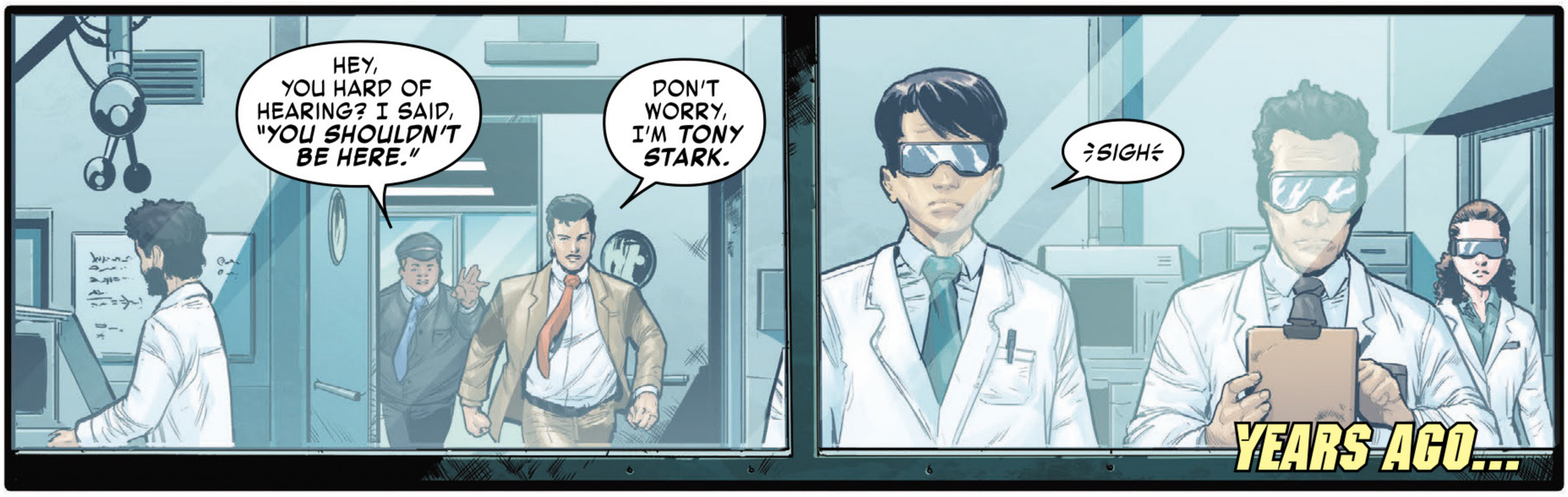
As a reformed arms dealer, when you worry about your company backsliding into weapons manufacturing, you look for someone you could install on the board who could speak to your values.

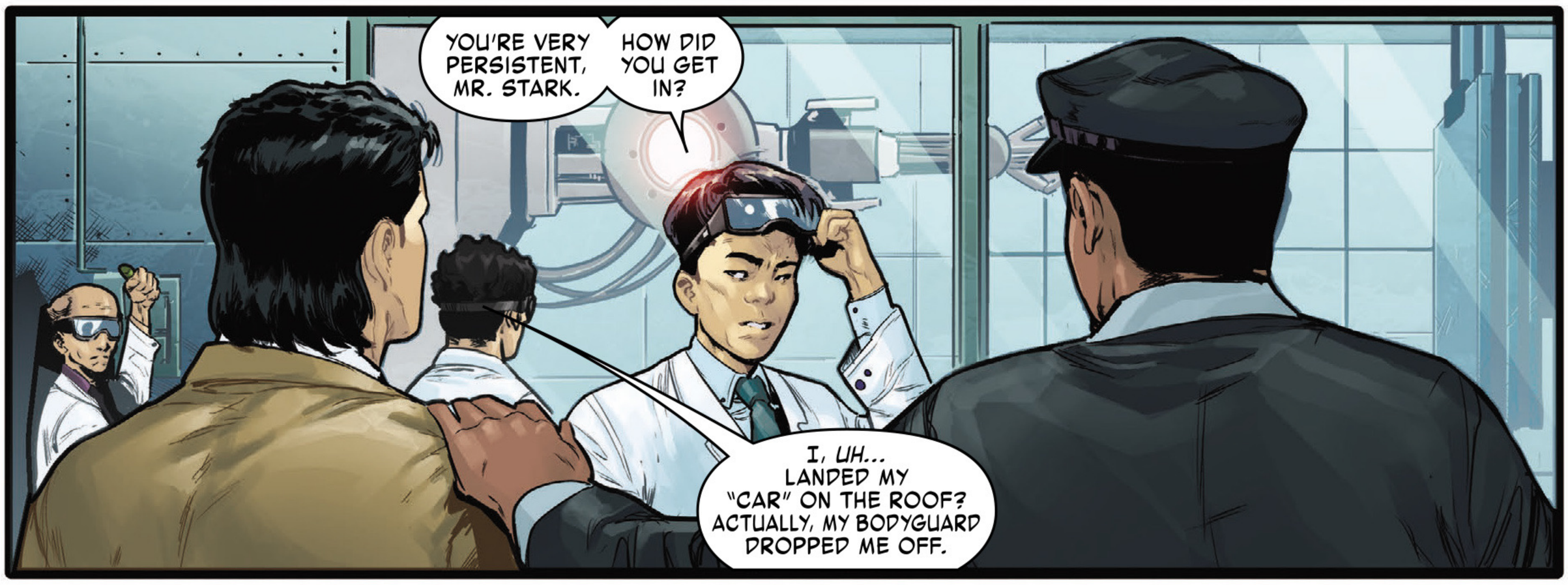
Someone whose moral compass always found true north.

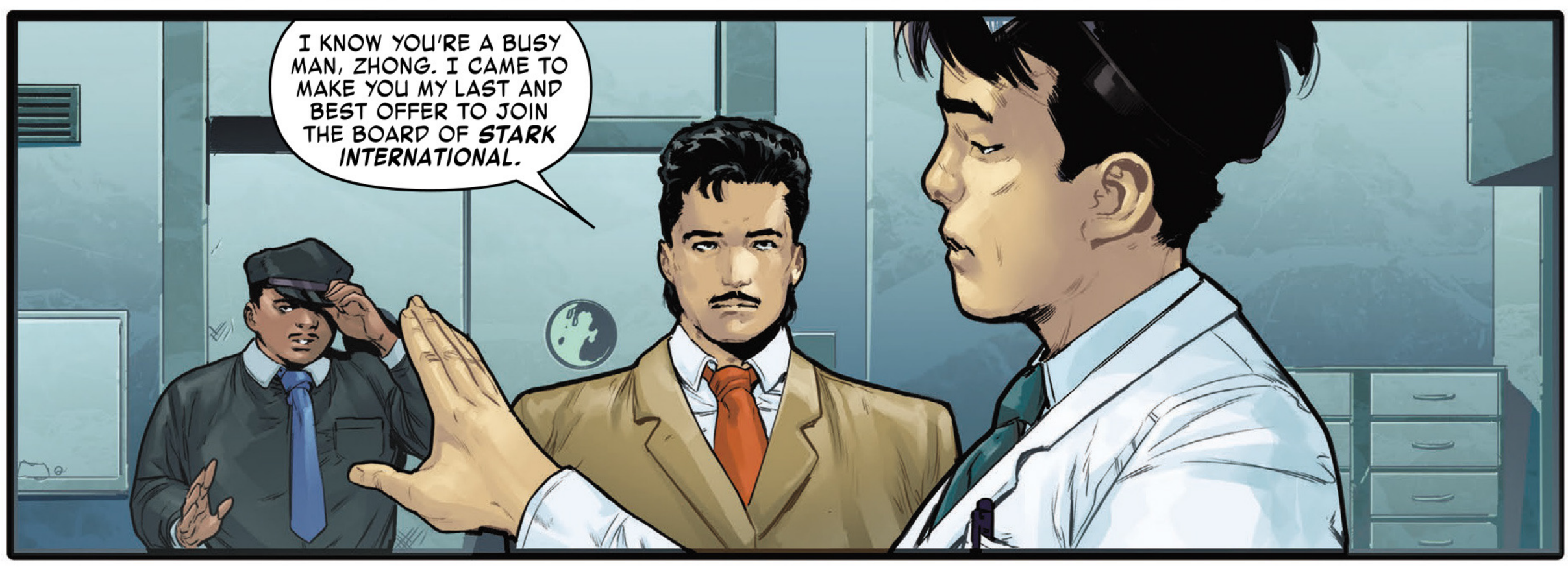
Now my friend is dead. The cops believe he died by suicide with my repulsor technology, and that doesn't even begin to make any sense.

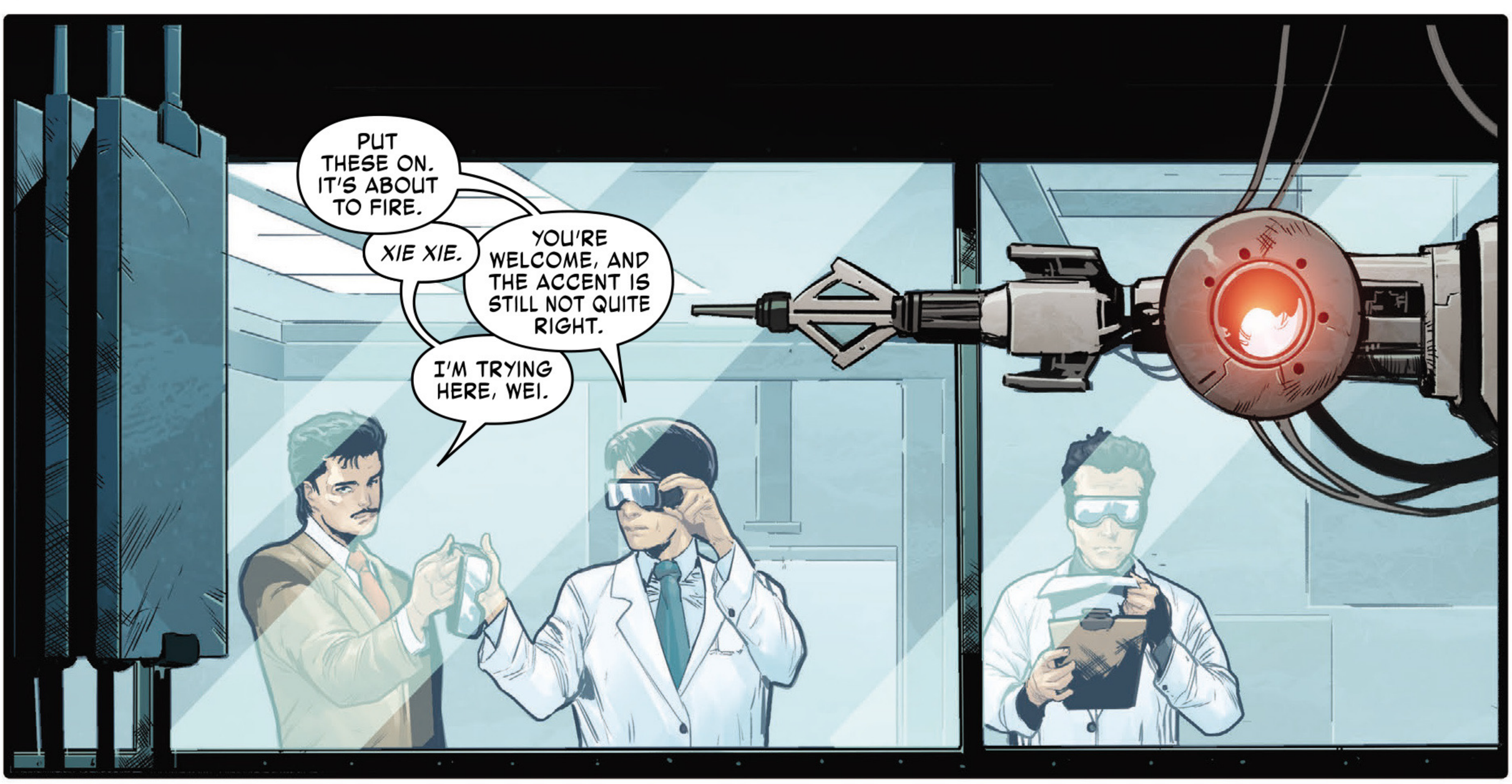
But…he is dead because I treated him like a "redundancy."

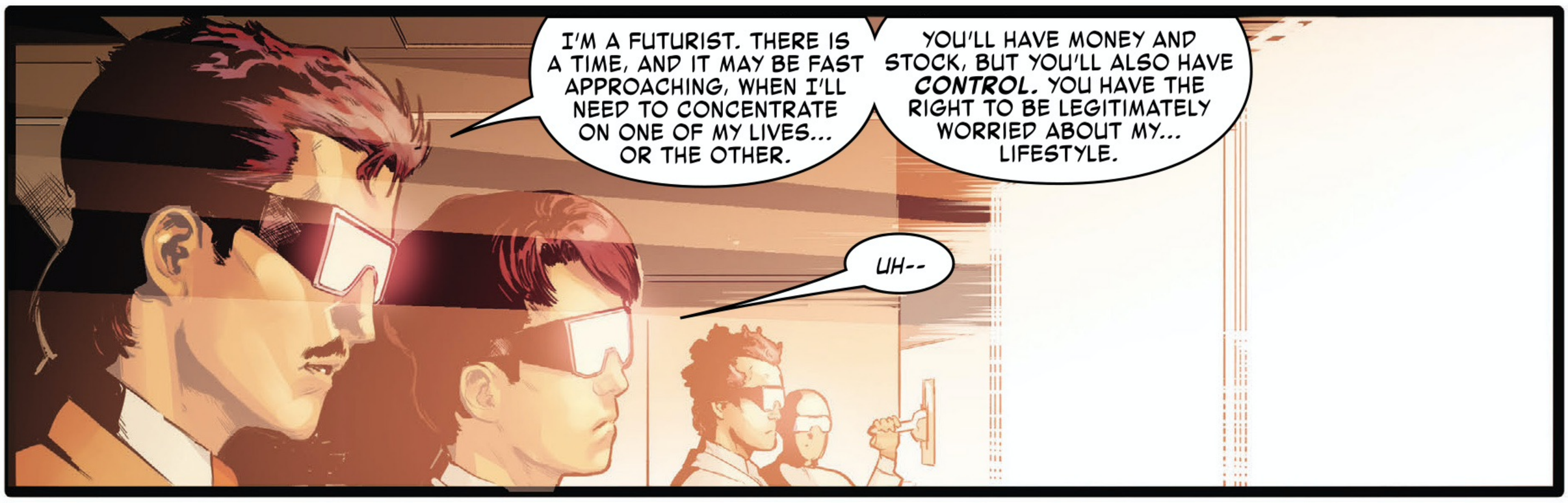
"HEY, YOU SHOULDN'T BE HERE."


HEY, YOU HARD OF HEARING? I SAID, "YOU SHOULDN'T BE HERE."
DON'T WORRY, I'M TONY STARK.
SIGH
YEARS AGO...


YOU'RE VERY PERSISTENT, MR. STARK.
HOW DID YOU GET IN?
I, UH... LANDED MY "CAR" ON THE ROOF? ACTUALLY, MY BODYGUARD DROPPED ME OFF.


I KNOW YOU'RE A BUSY MAN, ZHONG. I CAME TO MAKE YOU MY LAST AND BEST OFFER TO JOIN THE BOARD OF STARK INTERNATIONAL.


PUT THESE ON. IT'S ABOUT TO FIRE.
XIE XIE.
YOU'RE WELCOME, AND THE ACCENT IS STILL NOT QUITE RIGHT.
I'M TRYING HERE, WEI.


I'M A FUTURIST. THERE IS A TIME, AND IT MAY BE FAST APPROACHING, WHEN I'LL NEED TO CONCENTRATE ON ONE OF MY LIVES... OR THE OTHER.
YOU'LL HAVE MONEY AND STOCK, BUT YOU'LL ALSO HAVE CONTROL. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE LEGITIMATELY WORRIED ABOUT MY... LIFESTYLE.
UH--

MOVING ON.
I'M WORKING ON MYSELF, BUT I CAN'T DO WHAT I HAVE TO DO AND WORRY ABOUT THE COMPANY.
AND HONESTLY, SOMEDAY, I SHOULD WORK MYSELF OUT OF A JOB AND LET THE COMPANY GROW BEYOND ME--
--AND WHEN IT DOES, I NEED THE BOARD TO BE COMPRISED OF MULTIPLE PEOPLE I TRUST. MORAL PEOPLE.

I'M GOING TO RECLAIM MY PATENTS, AND I NEED SOMEONE WHO CAN STAND UP TO BULLIES FOR WHAT IS RIGHT.
I KNOW YOU'RE THE GUY BECAUSE YOU'VE BEEN STANDING UP TO A.I.M.

I'M NOT SAYING YES...BUT WHY DON'T YOU COME OVER FOR DINNER TONIGHT? YOU CAN MEET MY FAMILY.

HOW ABOUT BREAKFAST TOMORROW? I HAVE MY REGULAR MEETING TONIGHT, AND I HAVE A STREAK GOING.
RHODES TO STARK. YOU'RE GONNA WANNA BAIL OUT OF THIS MEETING AND GET BACK INTO YOUR "WORK CLOTHES." WE GOT BOGEYS INCOMING.
GOTTA RUN!

Above me at that time were minor players in the first **Armor Wars.**

The Raiders were equipped with my rudimentary designs… and that meant that they were formidable opponents.

HOW COULD WE LOSE IRON MAN? WE ALL SAW HIM HOVERING RIGHT HERE.

ACTUALLY, I DIDN'T. I JUST SAID I DID 'CAUSE YOU SOUNDED SO SURE.

PERHAPS THE RUMORS OF A STEALTH SUIT ARE TRUE? WE NEED TO BE WARY--IF HE FINDS US FIRST, HE'LL RIP THIS STARK TECH RIGHT OFF OUR BODIES.

HEY! HE'S RIGHT THERE--HE'S… HIS BOOT IS STUCK!

RHODEY, WHAT'S YOUR E.T.A.?

WHO SAYS I EVEN HAVE ONE?

FIRST, WE KILL STARK'S BODYGUARD!

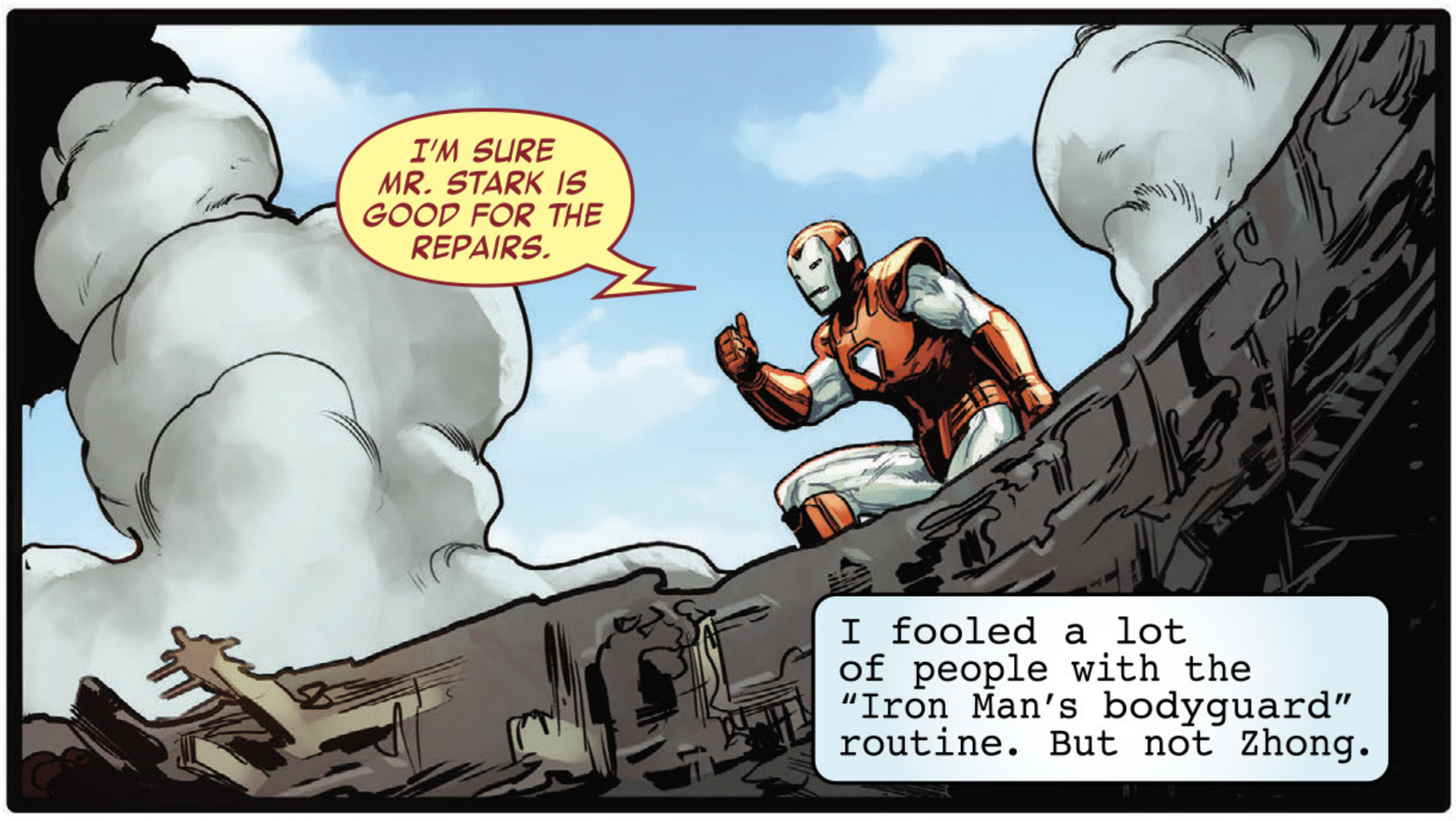
THEN WE KILL STARK!

VMMM

FOOM
DAMMIT.

I'M TRYING TO RECRUIT THIS MAN, NOT PUT HIM OUT OF BUSINESS.

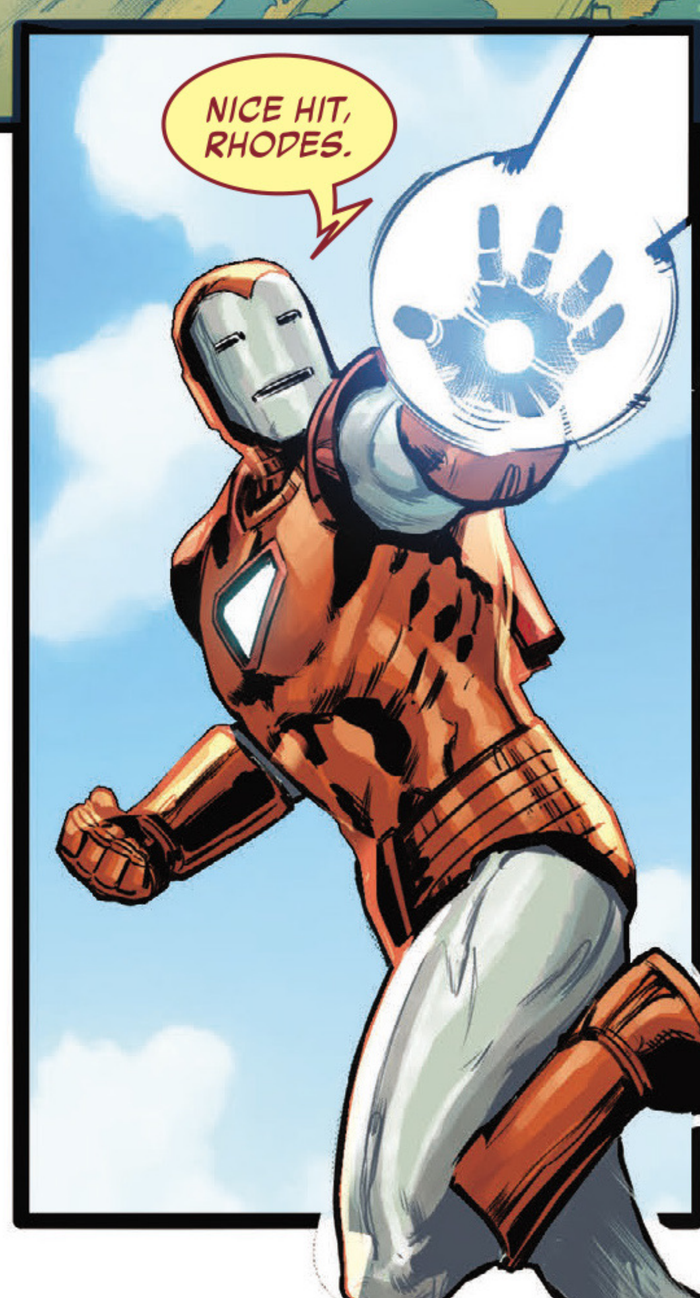
MR. STARK ESCAPED. I'M HERE TO MOP UP THESE BUMS!
MY LAB!


I'M SURE MR. STARK IS GOOD FOR THE REPAIRS.
I fooled a lot of people with the "Iron Man's bodyguard" routine. But not Zhong.

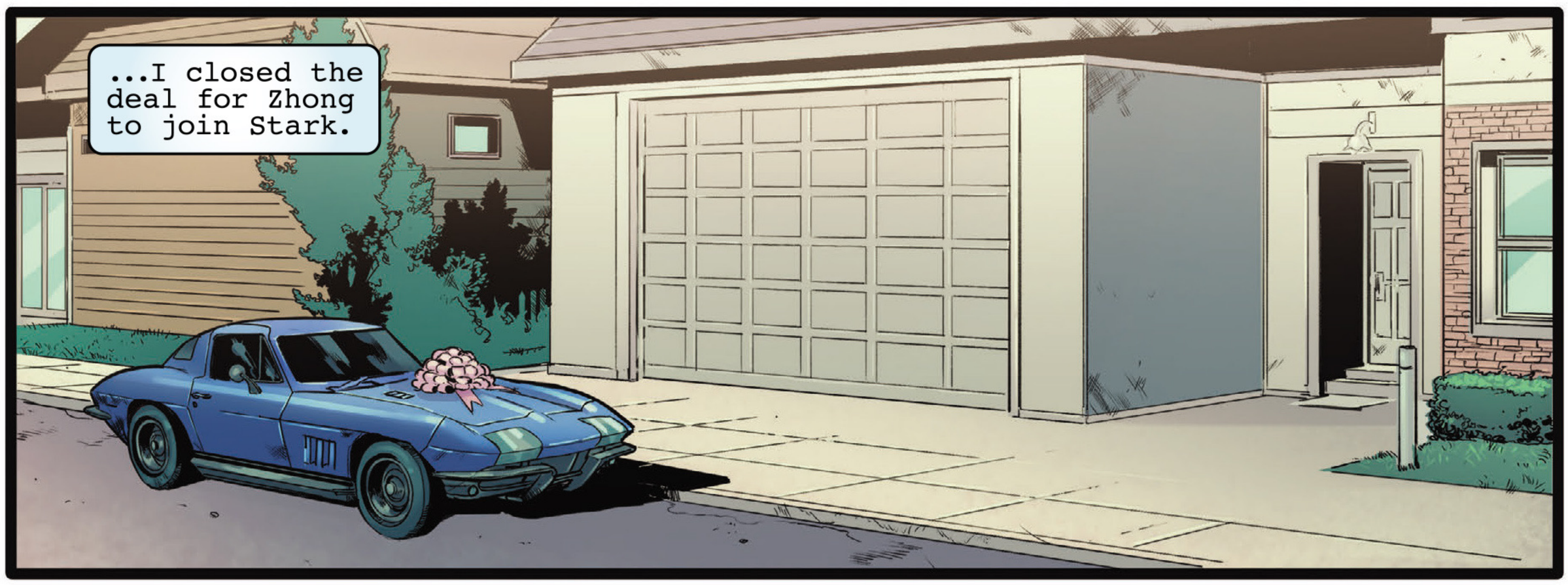
AAARGH!
SKRABOOM!

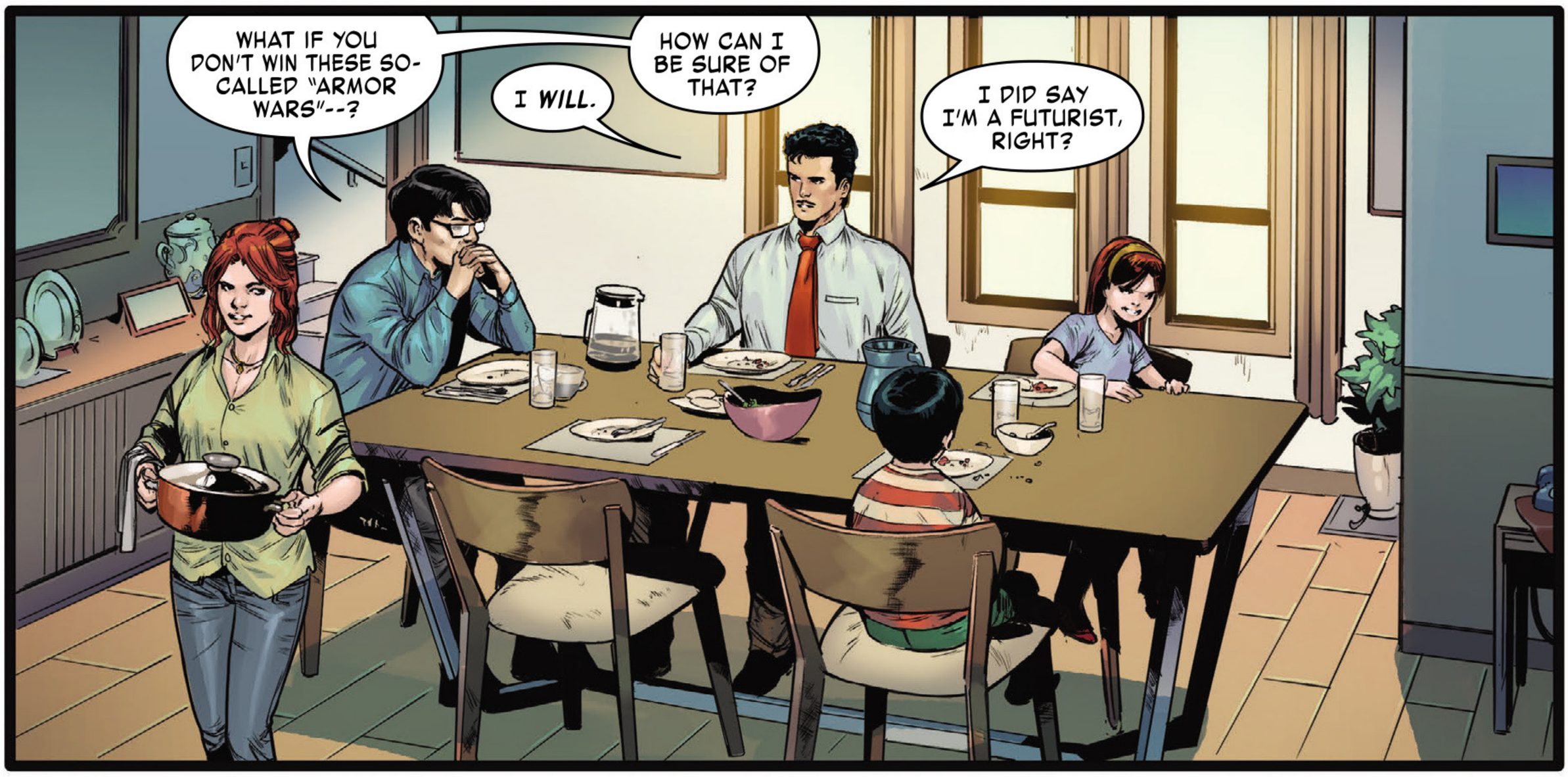
YOU RAIDERS WOULD DO WELL TO JUST LET IRON MAN CHECK THE TAGS ON YOUR GEAR--MAKE SURE THERE'S NONE OF STARK'S TECH IN THERE.

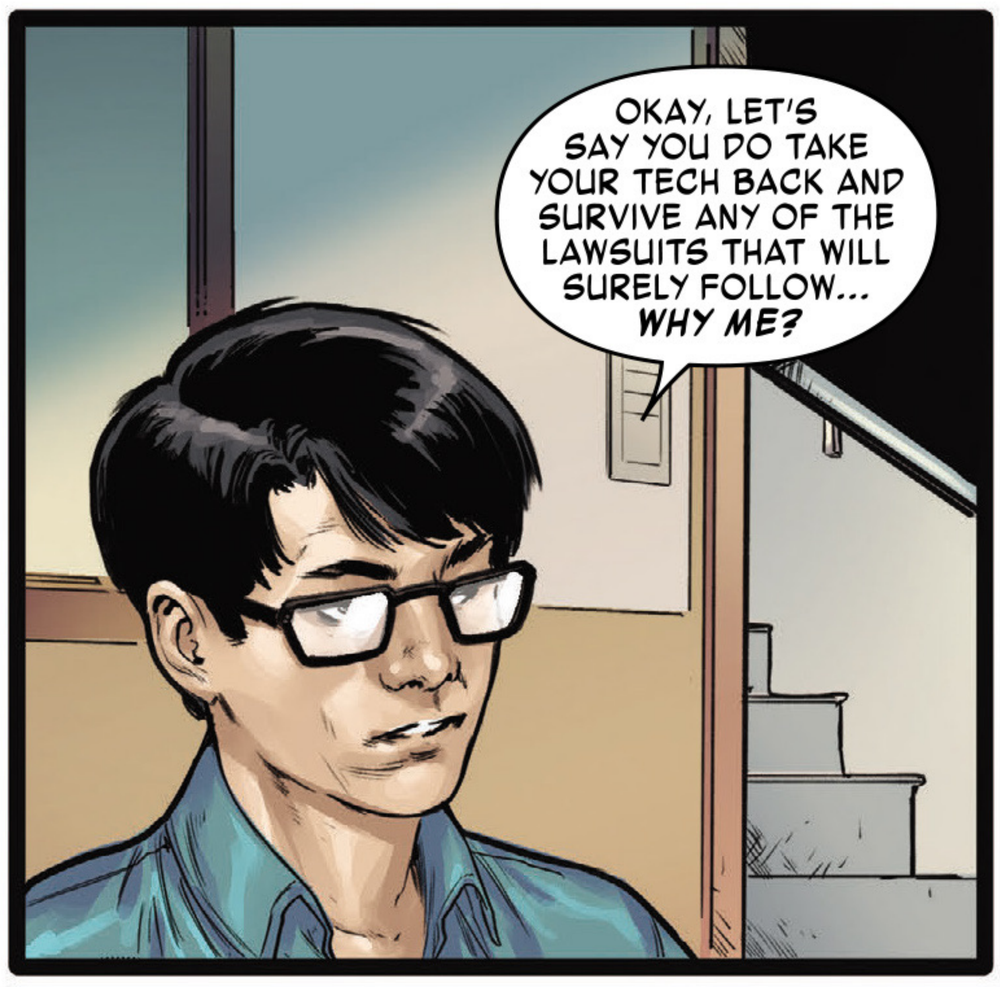
OTHERWISE... THINGS MIGHT GET *UNPLEASANT.*

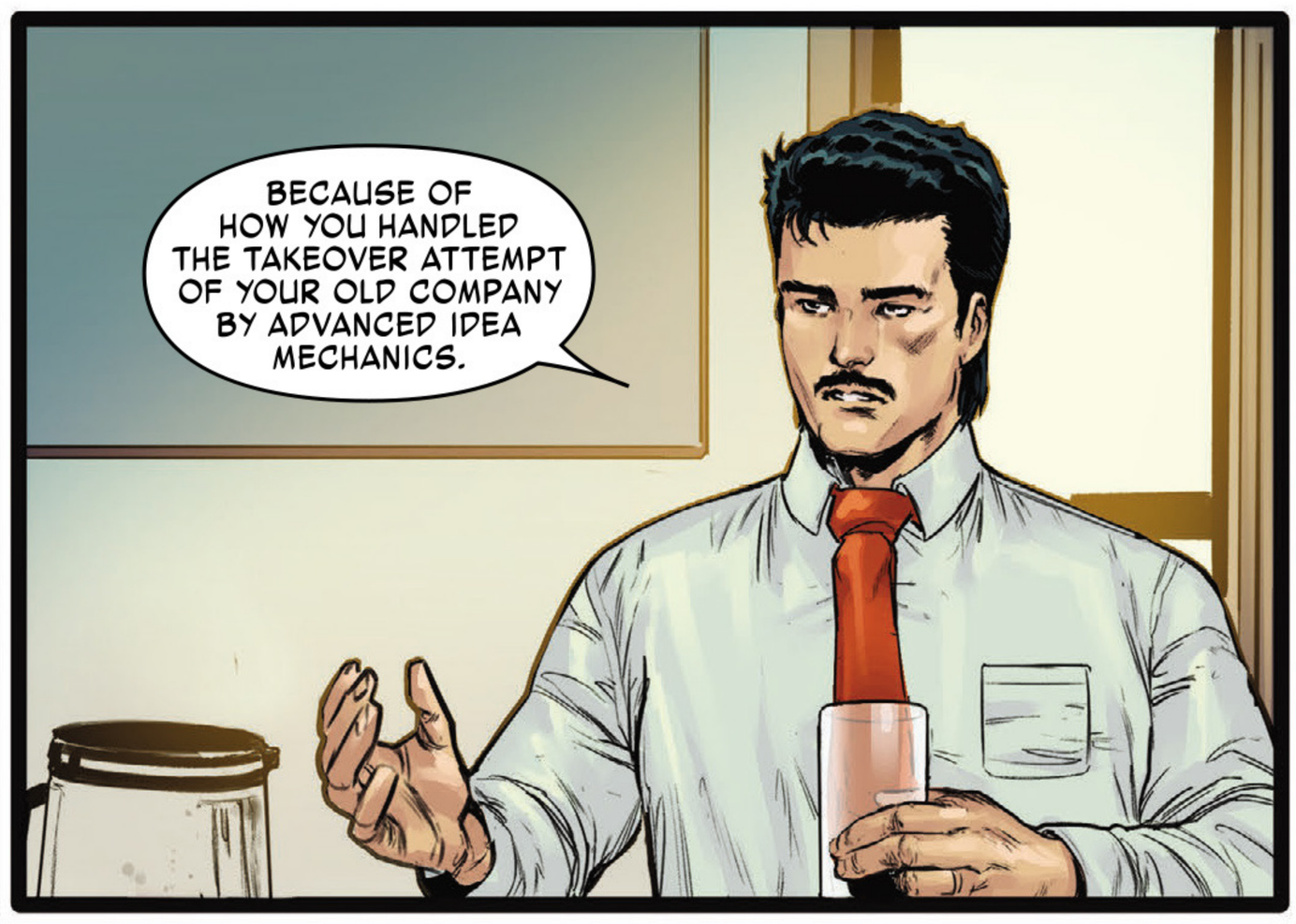


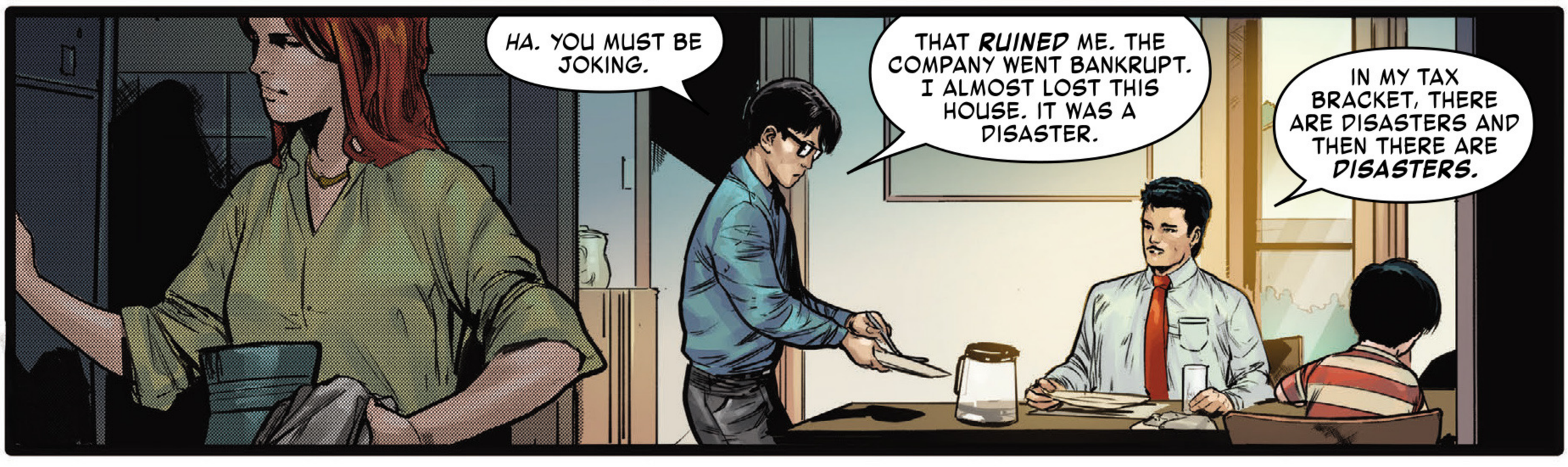
I couldn't be in the air fighting the fight and in the boardroom at the same time. Both were equally important.
THAT IS THE GUY STARK WANTS YOU TO WORK WITH?
BROOM!
MY CAR!
BWEEM!
BRADAP!
SORRY. I THINK I'VE SEEN ONE OF THESE IN STARK'S GARAGE!
I'LL SEND AN ELECTRO-MAIL ABOUT IT AFTER THIS IS OVER.
Rhodey and I stopped the Raiders, I was early for the night's meeting and the next morning…


...I closed the deal for Zhong to join Stark.


WHAT IF YOU DON'T WIN THESE SO-CALLED "ARMOR WARS"--?
I WILL.
HOW CAN I BE SURE OF THAT?
I DID SAY I'M A FUTURIST, RIGHT?

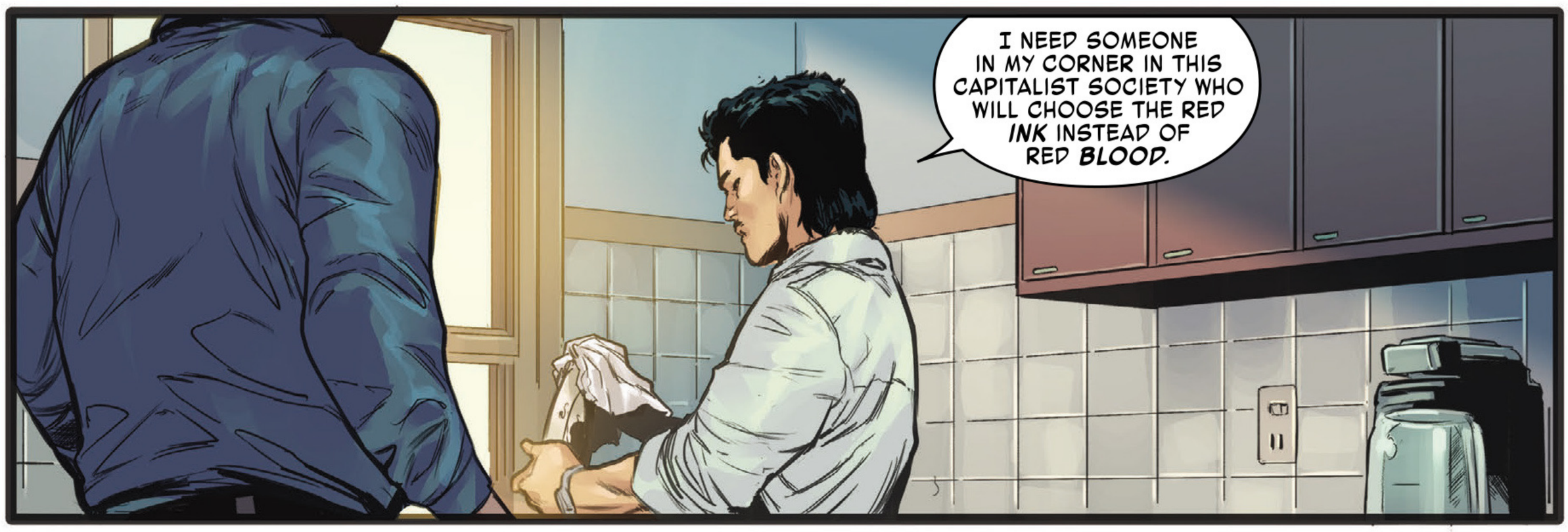

OKAY, LET'S SAY YOU DO TAKE YOUR TECH BACK AND SURVIVE ANY OF THE LAWSUITS THAT WILL SURELY FOLLOW... WHY ME?

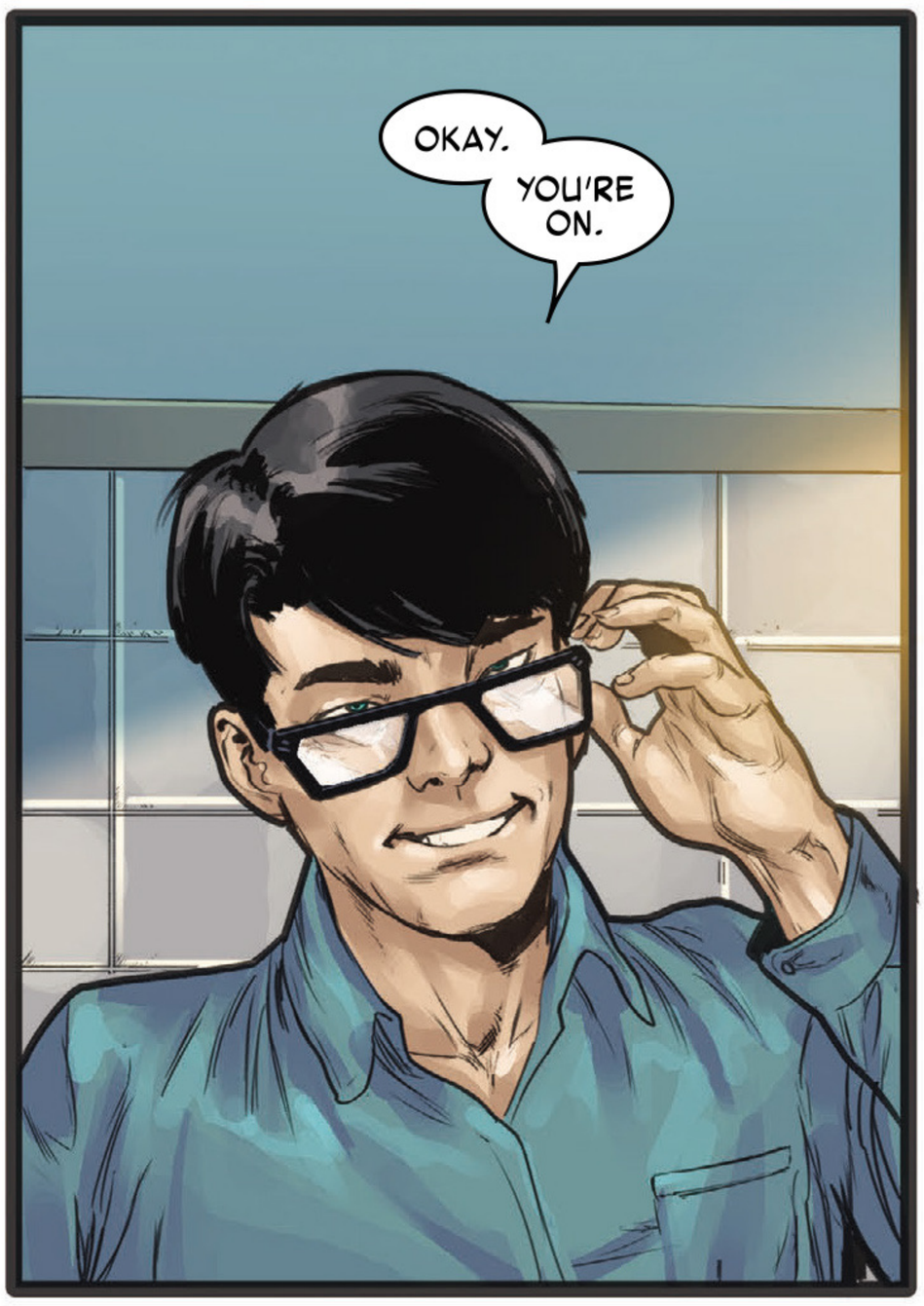

BECAUSE OF HOW YOU HANDLED THE TAKEOVER ATTEMPT OF YOUR OLD COMPANY BY ADVANCED IDEA MECHANICS.


HA. YOU MUST BE JOKING.
THAT RUINED ME. THE COMPANY WENT BANKRUPT. I ALMOST LOST THIS HOUSE. IT WAS A DISASTER.
IN MY TAX BRACKET, THERE ARE DISASTERS AND THEN THERE ARE DISASTERS.

YOUR DISASTER WAS ONLY ONE FOR THE ACCOUNTANTS.

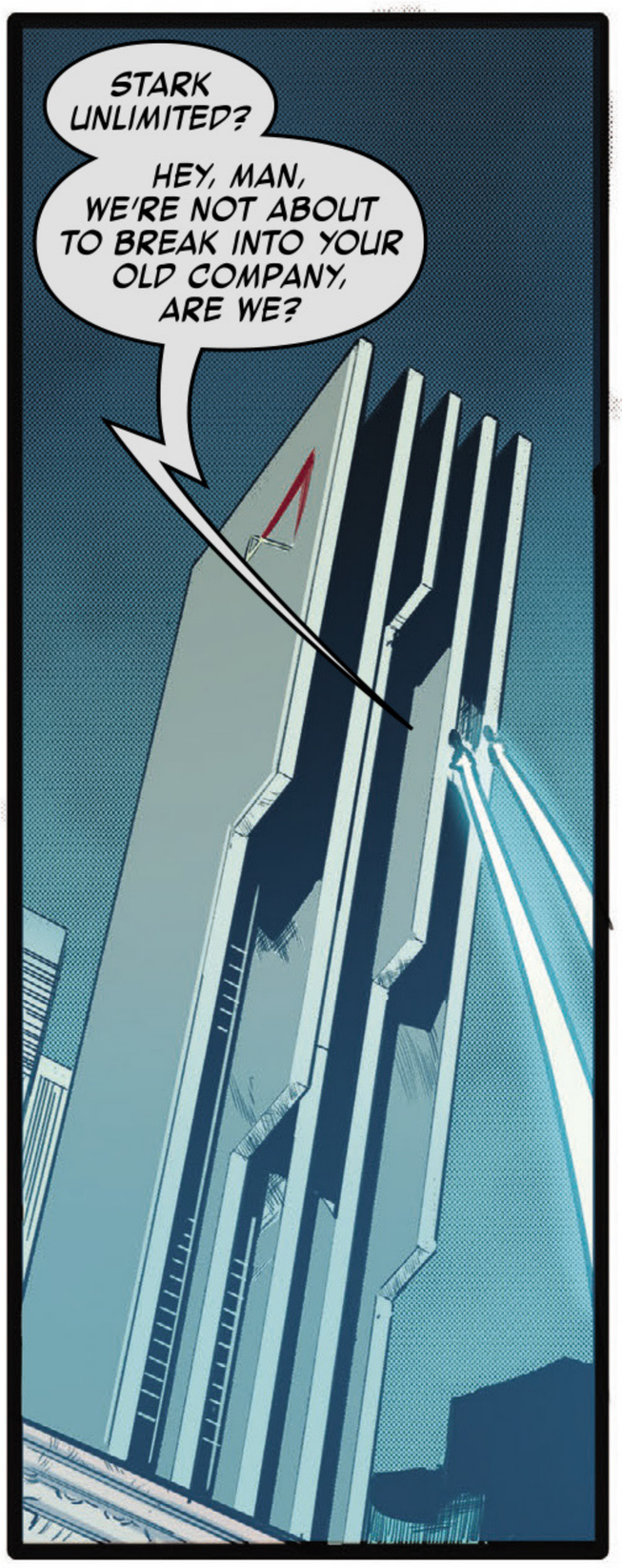
I KNEW WHAT A.I.M. REALLY WANTED THE LASERS FOR.
EXACTLY RIGHT.
THE TECHNOLOGY WE CREATE...IT CAN CAUSE REAL DISASTERS-- FOR PEOPLE.


I NEED SOMEONE IN MY CORNER IN THIS CAPITALIST SOCIETY WHO WILL CHOOSE THE RED *INK* INSTEAD OF RED *BLOOD*.

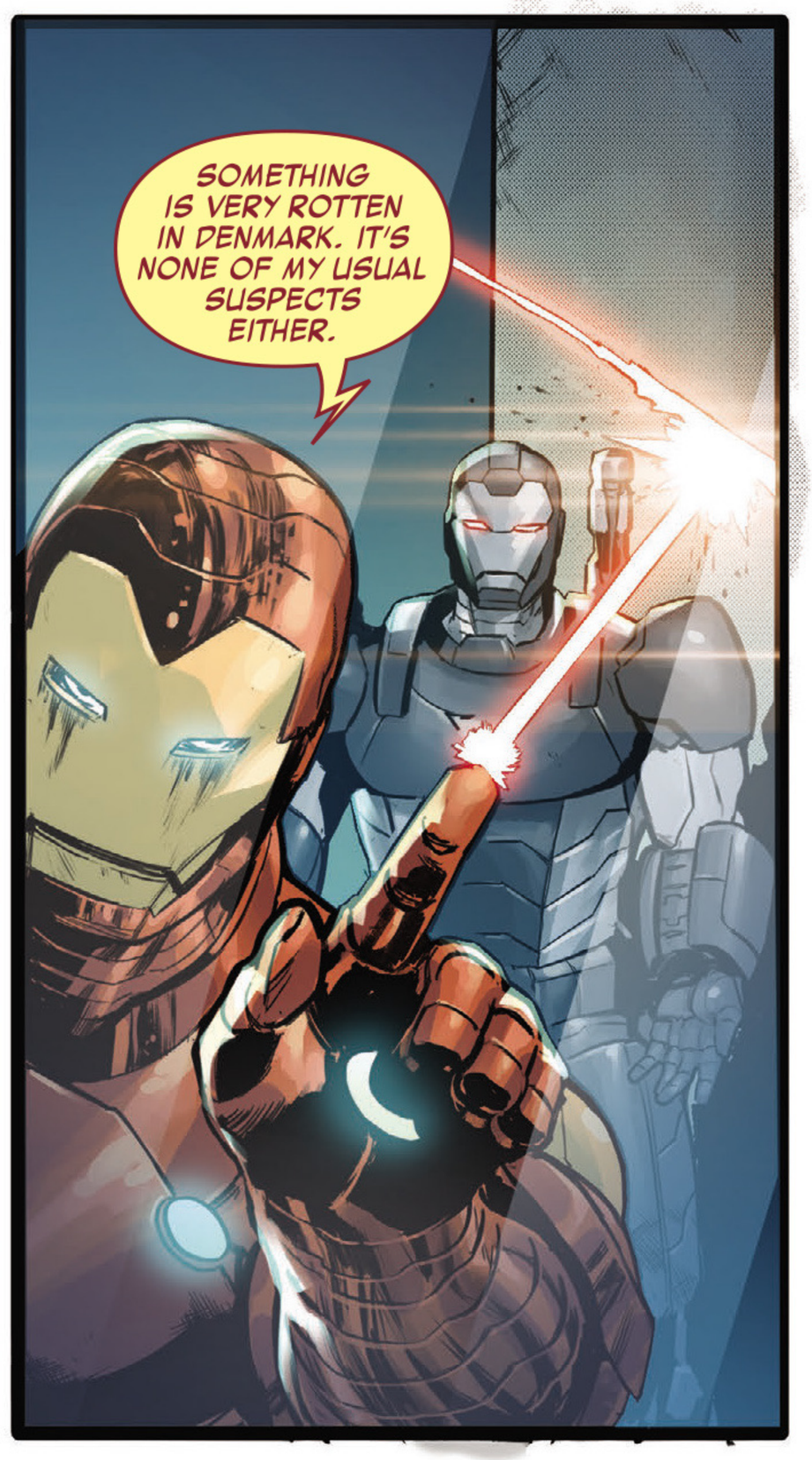

OKAY.
YOU'RE ON.

YOU WON'T REGRET IT...

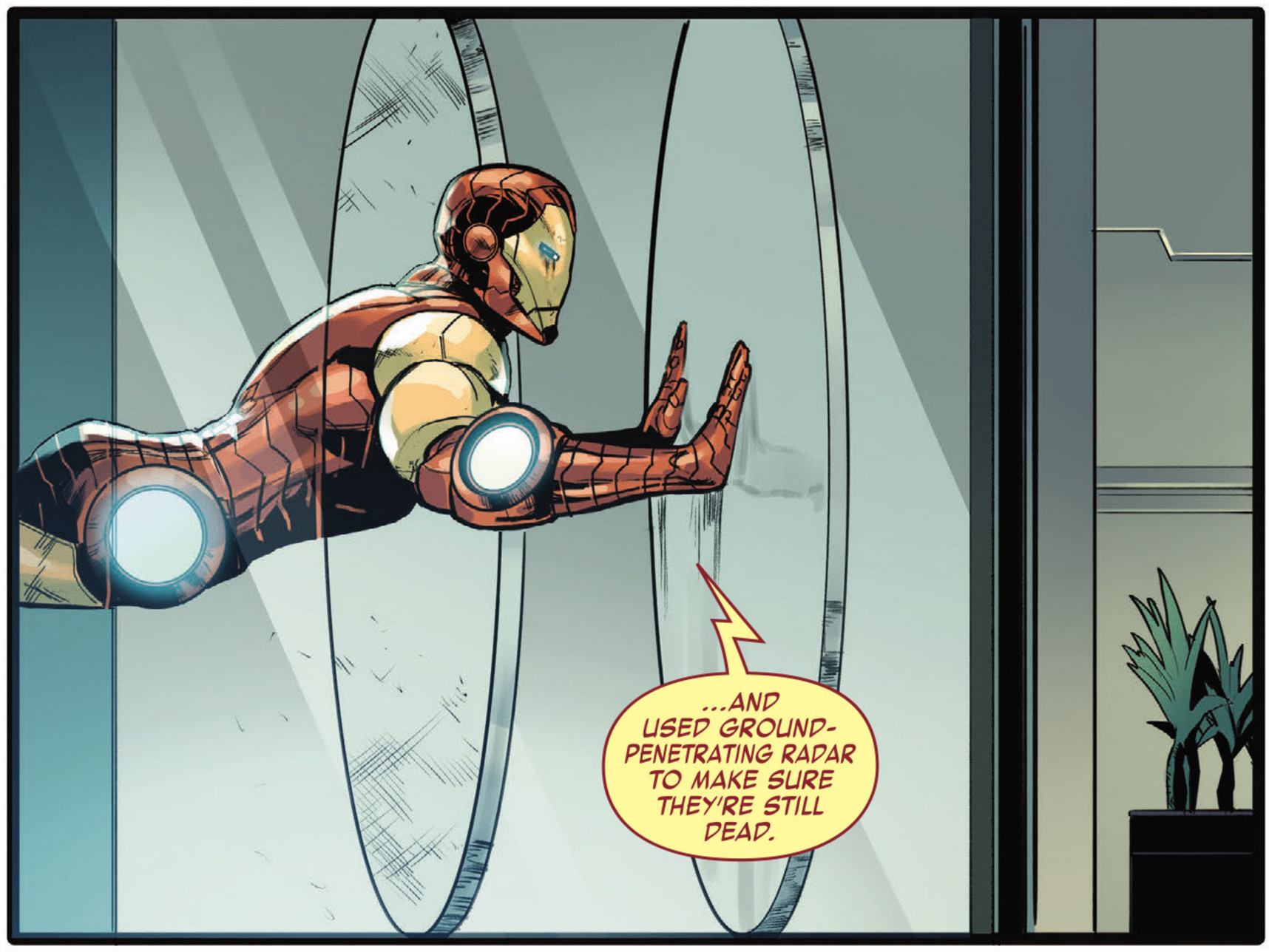
"...I PROMISE."
DO NOT CROSS - DO NOT CRL
BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU, TONY.
WHEN I SAW THE NEWS ABOUT ZHONG, I CAME RIGHT AWAY.
I'M SORRY.
THANKS, RHODEY.
WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?
FLY WITH ME, WAR MACHINE.
THERE'S A HUNCH I HAVE TO CHECK OUT BACK IN NEW YORK CITY.

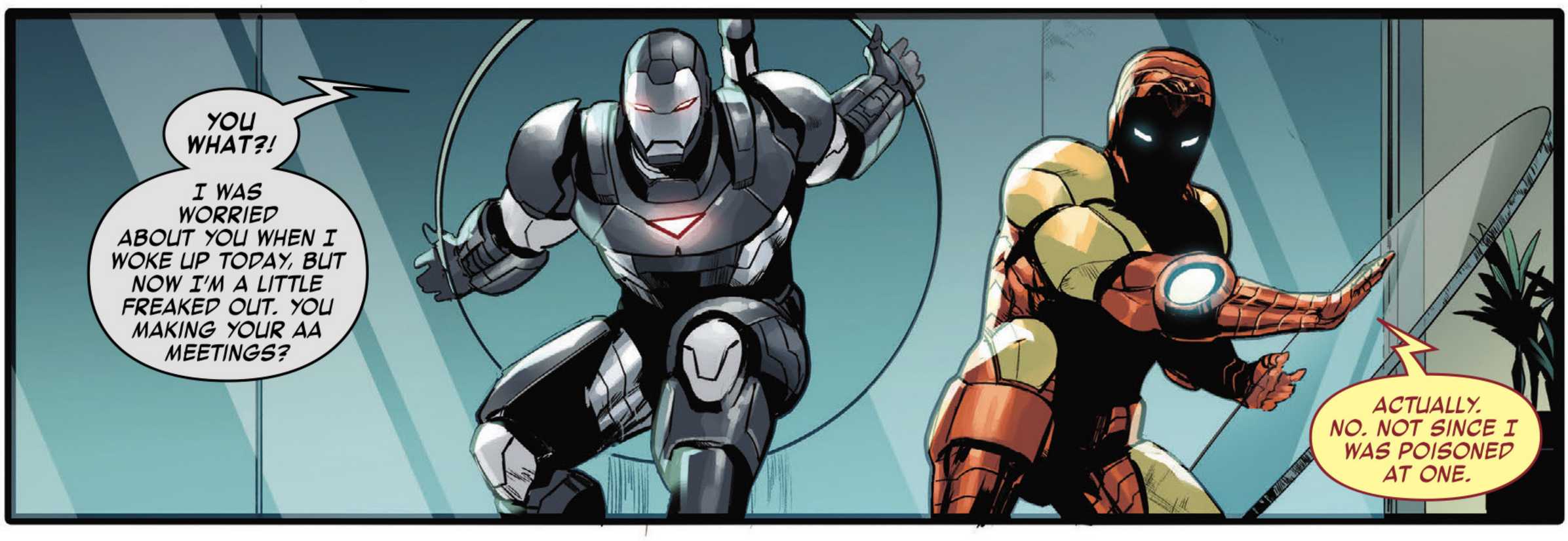

STARK UNLIMITED?
HEY, MAN, WE'RE NOT ABOUT TO BREAK INTO YOUR OLD COMPANY, ARE WE?

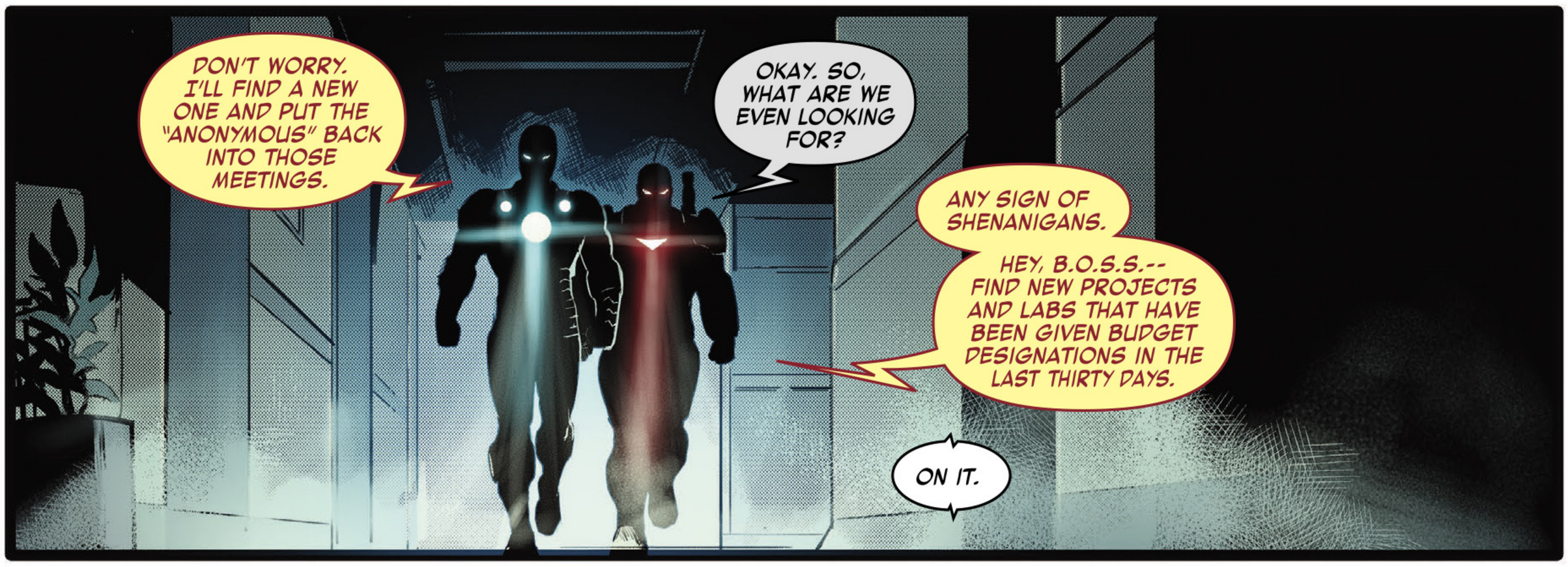
I DON'T KNOW HOW ENCRYPTED MY COMMS ARE RIGHT NOW, SO MAYBE WE SHOULD TREAT THIS AS A PARTY CHAT.
SERIOUSLY?
HOW MUCH TROUBLE ARE YOU IN?

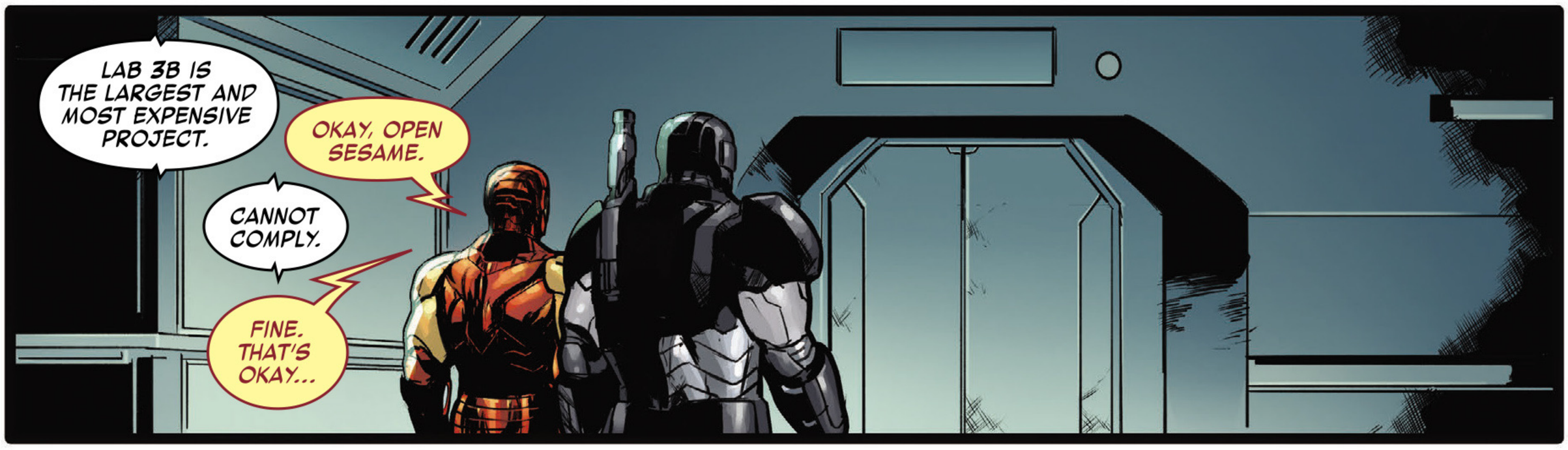

SOMETHING IS VERY ROTTEN IN DENMARK. IT'S NONE OF MY USUAL SUSPECTS EITHER.

I EVEN WENT TO THE GRAVES OF OBADIAH STANE AND THE HAMMERS...

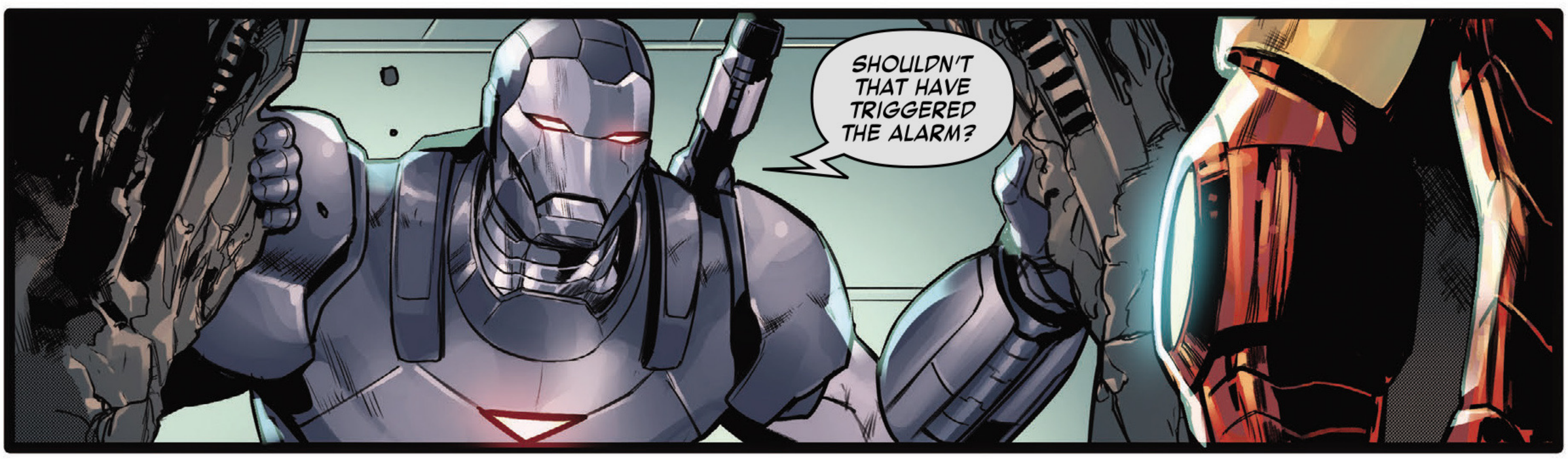

...AND USED GROUND-PENETRATING RADAR TO MAKE SURE THEY'RE STILL DEAD.

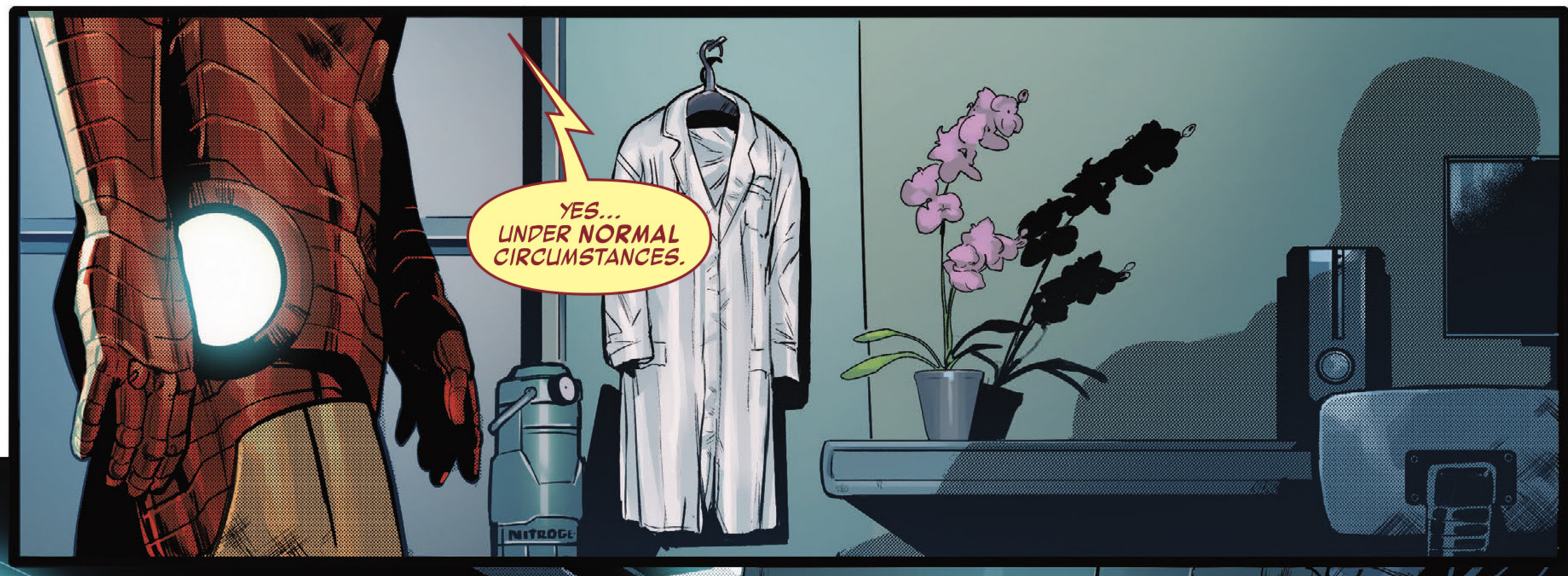

YOU WHAT?!
I WAS WORRIED ABOUT YOU WHEN I WOKE UP TODAY, BUT NOW I'M A LITTLE FREAKED OUT. YOU MAKING YOUR AA MEETINGS?
ACTUALLY. NO. NOT SINCE I WAS POISONED AT ONE.


DON'T WORRY. I'LL FIND A NEW ONE AND PUT THE "ANONYMOUS" BACK INTO THOSE MEETINGS.
OKAY. SO, WHAT ARE WE EVEN LOOKING FOR?
ANY SIGN OF SHENANIGANS.
HEY, B.O.S.S.-- FIND NEW PROJECTS AND LABS THAT HAVE BEEN GIVEN BUDGET DESIGNATIONS IN THE LAST THIRTY DAYS.
ON IT.


LAB 3B IS THE LARGEST AND MOST EXPENSIVE PROJECT.
OKAY, OPEN SESAME.
CANNOT COMPLY.
FINE. THAT'S OKAY...

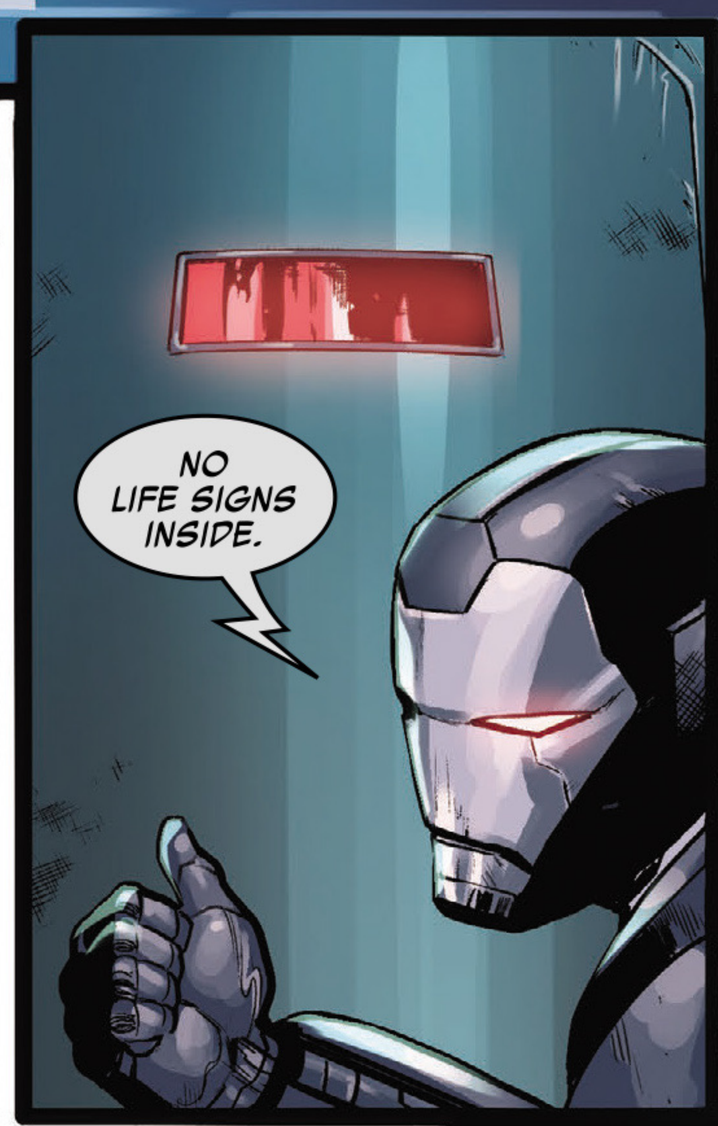
...I BROUGHT MY LOCK-PICK.
BOOM!


SHOULDN'T THAT HAVE TRIGGERED THE ALARM?

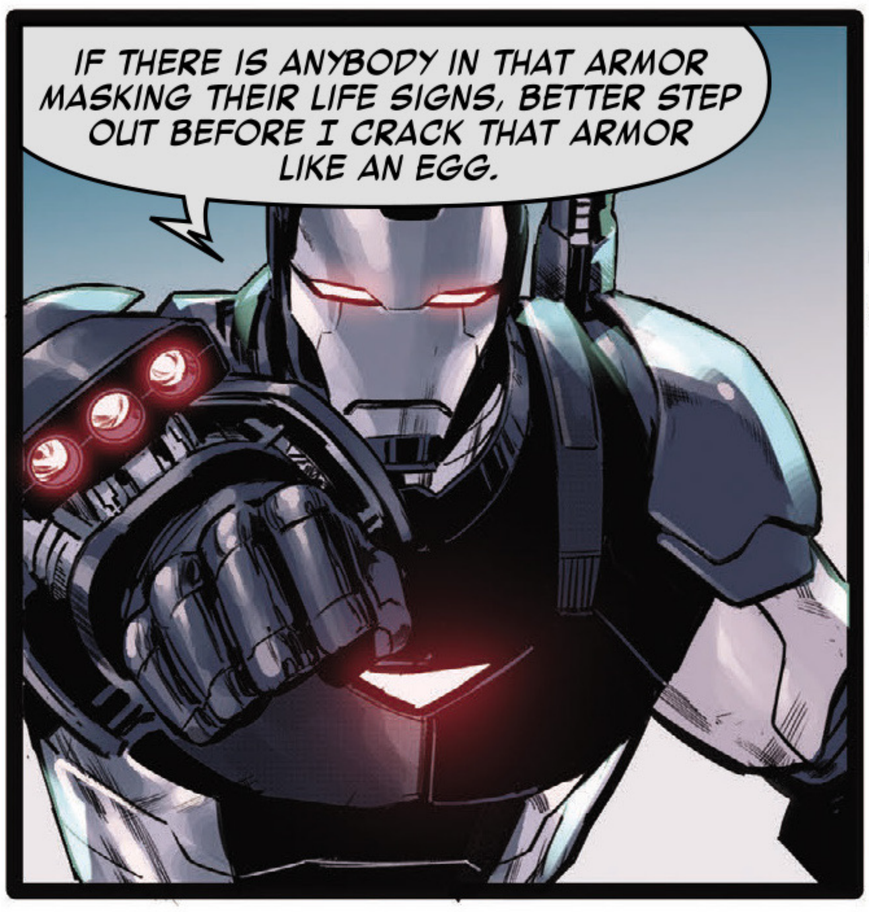


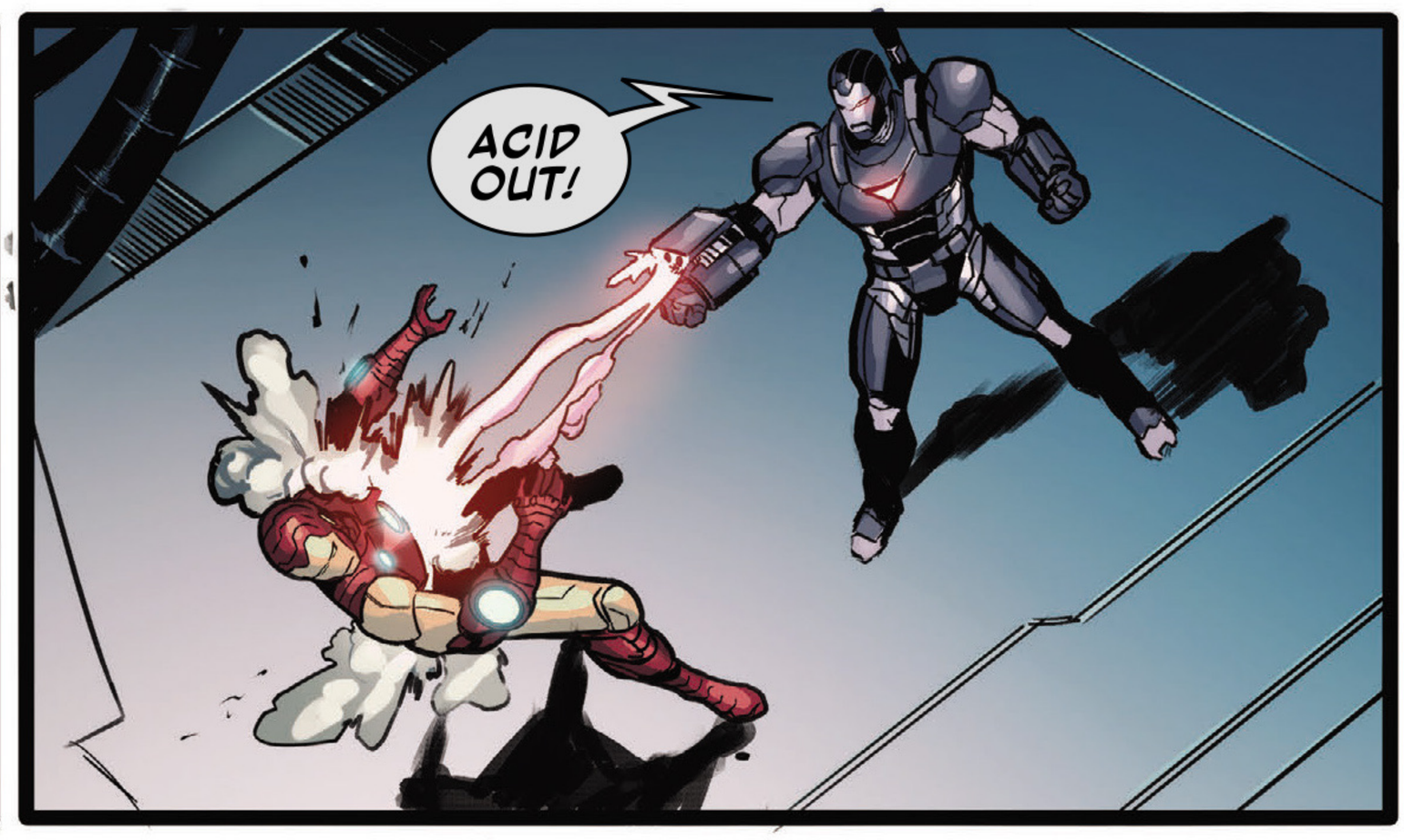
SOMEONE ABDUCTED THE LIVING LASER. MADE HIM THINK IT WAS ME.

IF YOU'RE EXPECTING ANOTHER BODY IN THERE, I HAVE GOOD NEWS...

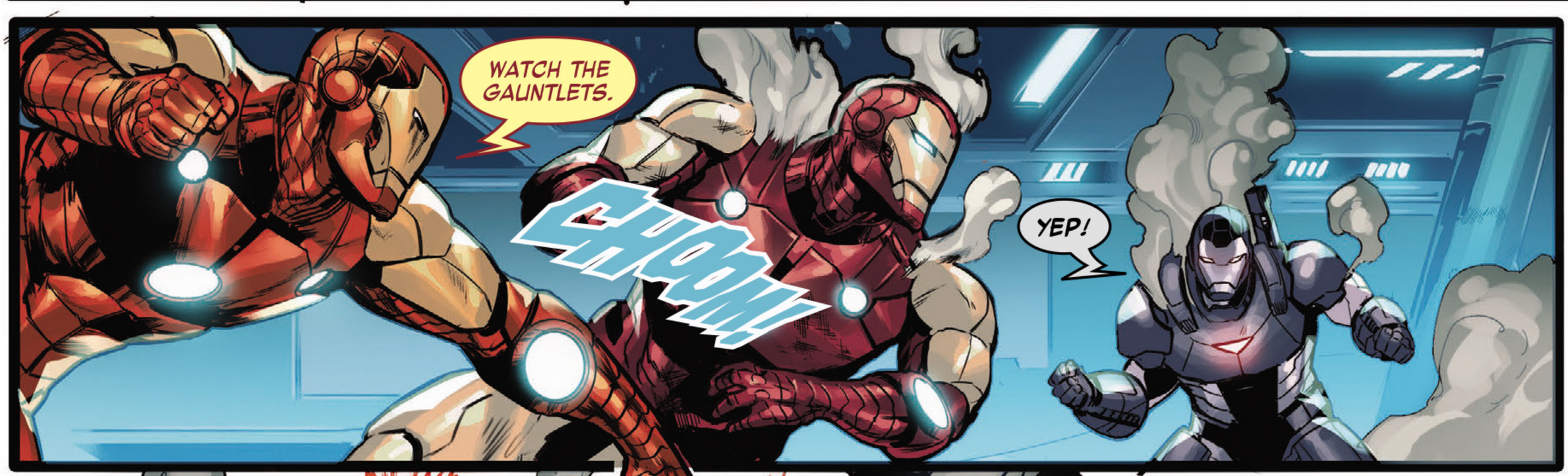


SKRABOOM!
UGHN!
LIKE I WAS SAYING...WE'D FIND A DOPPELGANGER ARMOR IN THAT POD.
SKRASHK!


IF THERE IS ANYBODY IN THAT ARMOR MASKING THEIR LIFE SIGNS, BETTER STEP OUT BEFORE I CRACK THAT ARMOR LIKE AN EGG.


ACID OUT!

HSSS
BWEEEEM!


WATCH THE GAUNTLETS.
CHOOM!
YEP!

GOT 'EM!

STEP AWAY, RHODEY.
SKRAK!

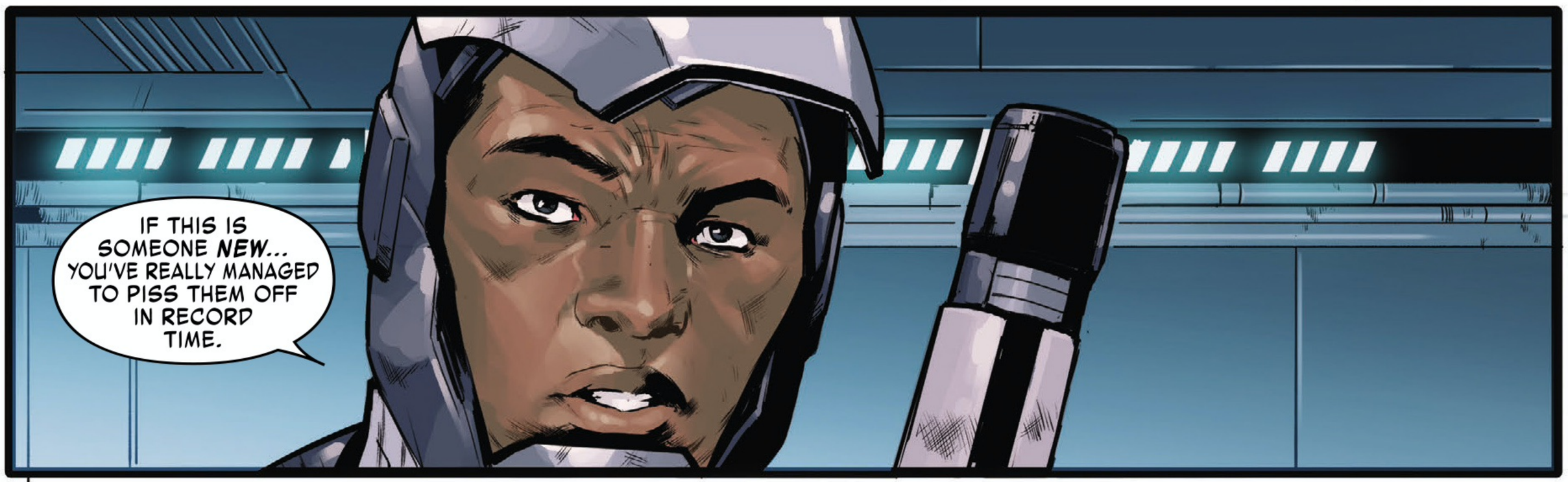
DON'T WANT TO GET ANY OF THIS LIQUID NITROGEN ON YOUR ARMOR.
SPLASH
KRIK
KRACK
SKRICK
THIS SHOULDN'T BE HERE. THE DESIGNS FOR THIS ARMOR WERE CONCEIVED AND FABRICATED OUTSIDE OF STARK. I'VE BEEN HACKED.
SKRUNCH!
DAMMIT.

HELLO, TONY. IT MUST BE SO STRANGE FOR YOU TO HEAR ME SPEAK WITH YOUR OWN VOICE.
YOU SPARED MANY LIVES BY DISCOVERING THIS LAB BEFORE I REVEALED IT TOMORROW.
I'LL ADMIT, YOU WERE SO SLOW OUT OF THE GATE THAT I WAS WORRIED YOU'D BE YET ANOTHER BORING DISAPPOINTMENT.
THAT'S THE MOST REALISTIC LIFE-MODEL DECOY I'VE EVER SEEN. AS FAR AS I KNOW.
YEAH. A REAL SKIN JOB.
I'M SORRY ABOUT YOUR FRIEND MR. ZHONG. SUICIDE IS ALWAYS SO TRAGIC.
AND SUICIDE WHILE USING A PIECE OF STARK TECH? IT MUST HURT.

YOU MURDERING BASTARD--HE WAS A GREAT MAN--AND HE WAS MY FRIEND!

AND YOU WON'T GET WHAT YOU WANT. THE COMPANY IS *SAFE*. ZHONG'S SHARES OF MY OLD COMPANY--

--WERE TRANSFERRED TO A CHARITY IN THE DAYS *BEFORE* HIS UNTIMELY DEMISE.
THOSE SHARES ARE NOW IN PLAY AND HAVE BEEN *SOLD* SEVERAL TIMES.
I OWN THE COMPANY... THE PATENTS...THE LAND...I OWN IT *ALL*.



STARK UNLIMITED IS UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT. WE HAVE BIG PLANS.

COME FIND ME...IF YOU CAN. I HAVE A ONE-TIME OFFER TO MAKE YOU.

HAHA!

WE'LL SEE HOW SMART YOU REALLY ARE.

TONY, STEP BACK, THIS THING'S GONNA GO UP.

TONY, COME ON, MAN.

ZHONG WEI WILL BE AVENGED BEFORE THIS IS OVER.

HAHAHA!

THAT'S THE SPIRIT, STARK!

WHEN THE BELL RINGS IN THE MORNING-- COME OUT SWINGING.

HAHAHA!

HSSKK1101000101--?!

RHODEY, I'M GONNA NEED YOU TO KEEP YOUR DISTANCE FROM ME FOR A WHILE.

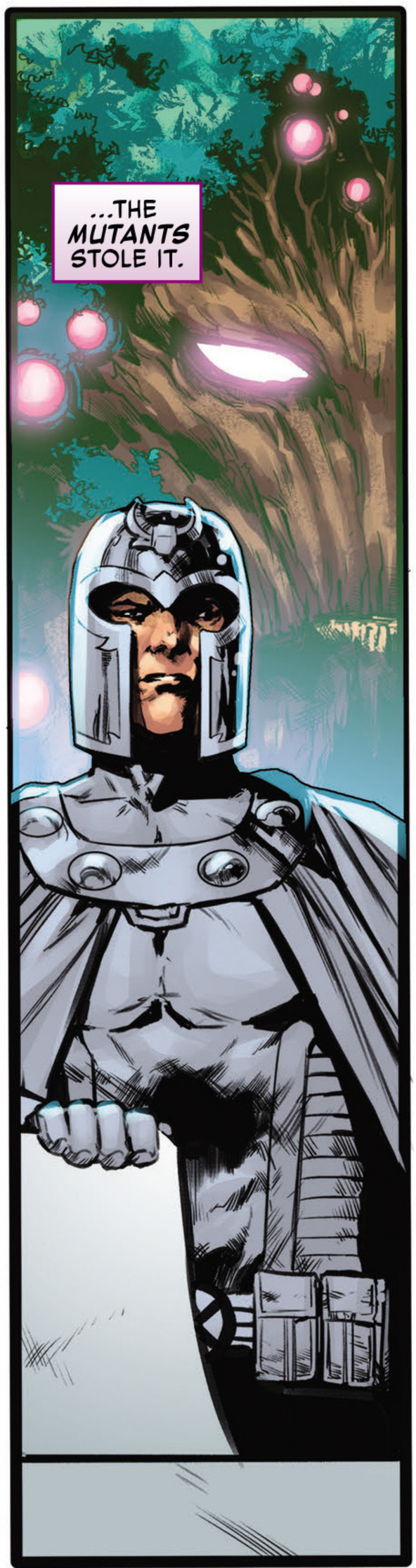
I KNOW WHO'S BEHIND THIS NOW, AND I NEED TO GO START AN INTERNATIONAL INCIDENT.

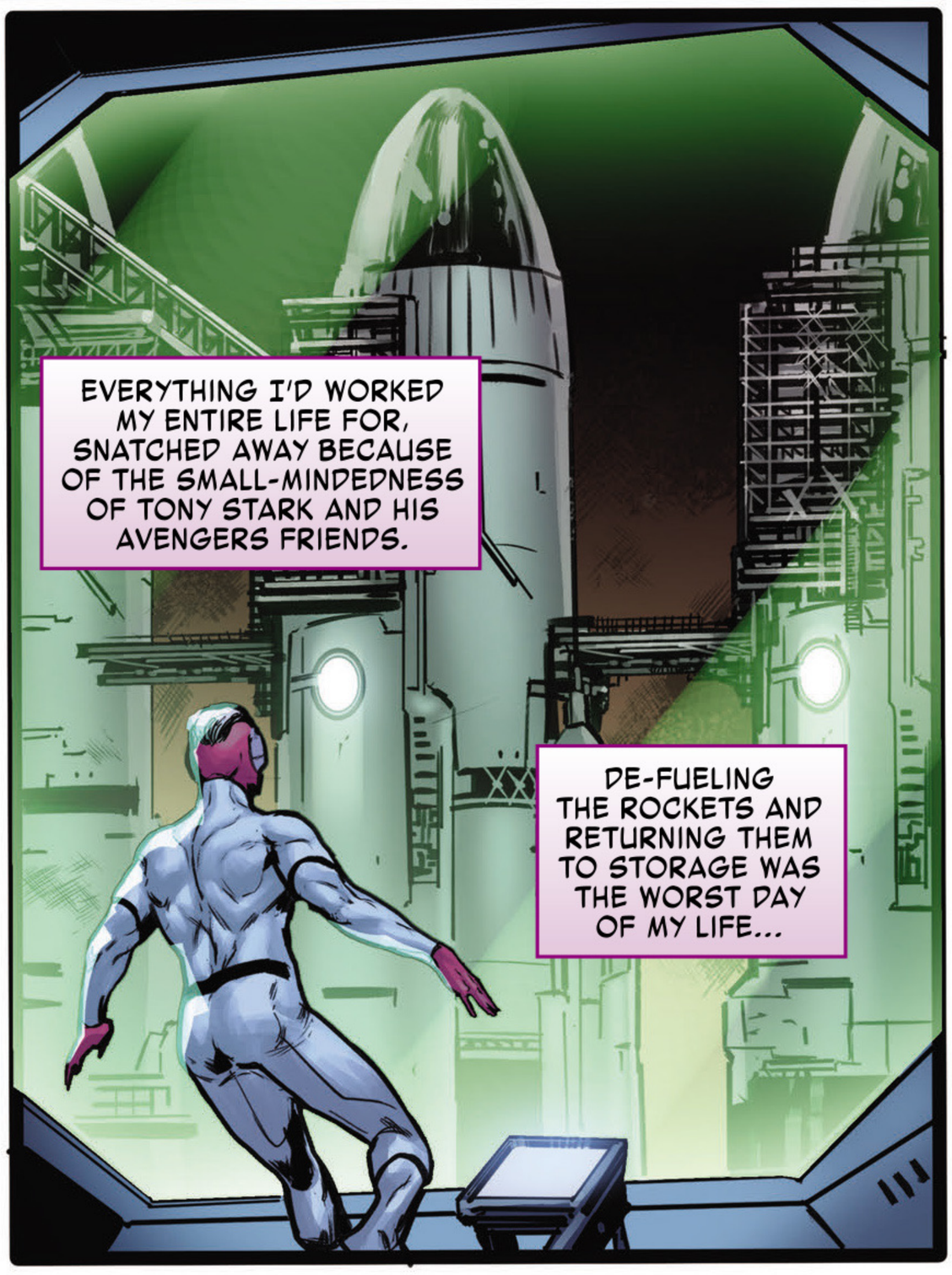
FOUR

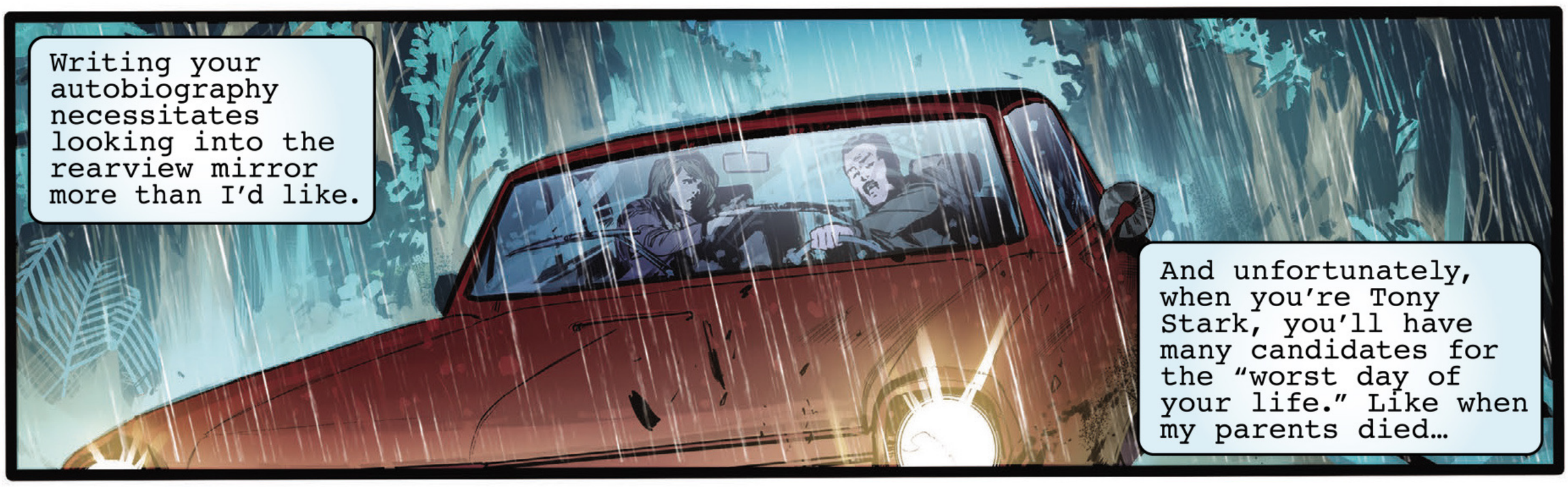
ONCE UPON A TIME ON A TERRAFORMED MARS, THE GODS CLASHED...*

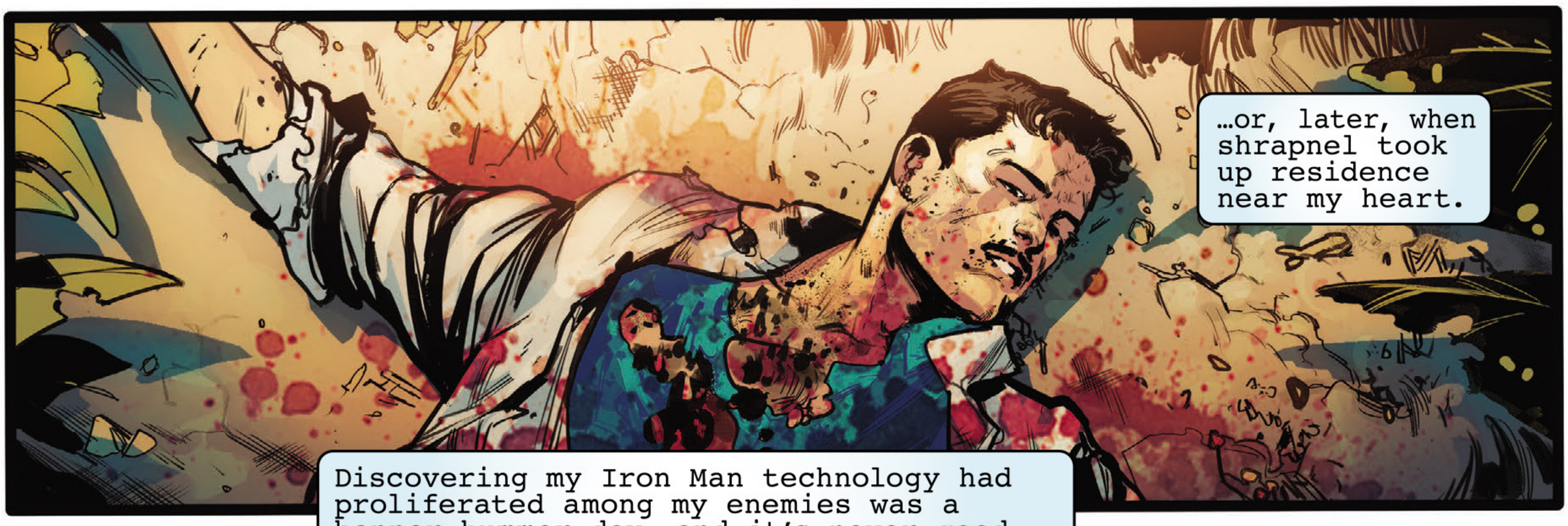
*SEE AVENGERS (2013) #3! --DS

...AND INSTEAD OF HOLDING ON TO THAT PRIZE AND CONTINUING TO MAKE IT A GREEN WORLD, THEY LET IT *DIE* ON THE VINE.









…on this morning, the hair on the back of my neck was standing up, and by night, I'd have a new pony in my "Worst Day Derby."

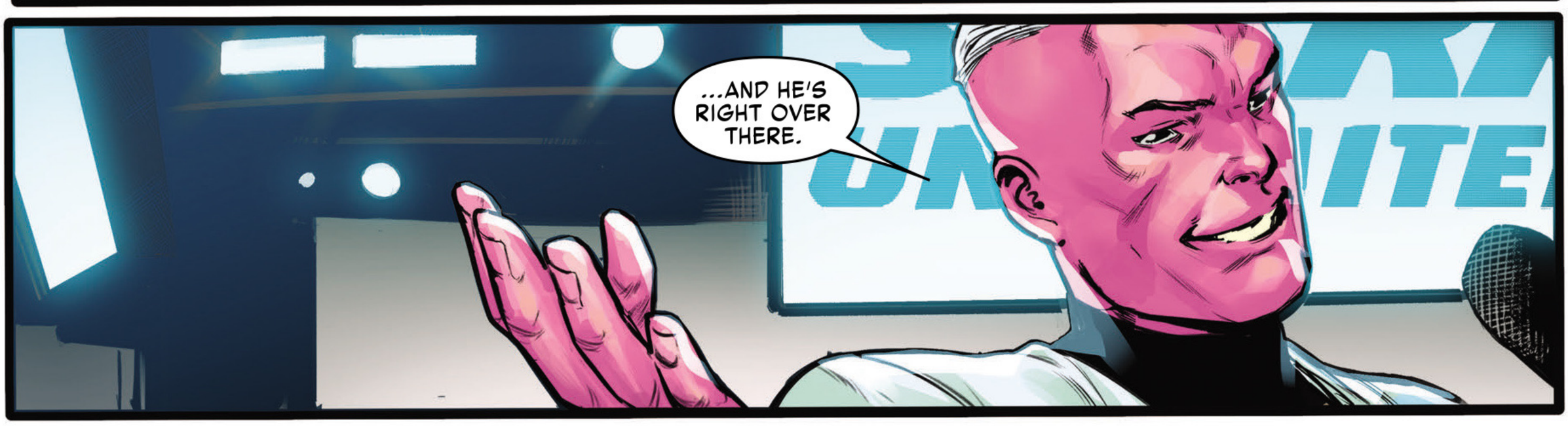
My previously unnamed enemy told me to come out swinging "at the bell."

…the New York Stock Exchange.

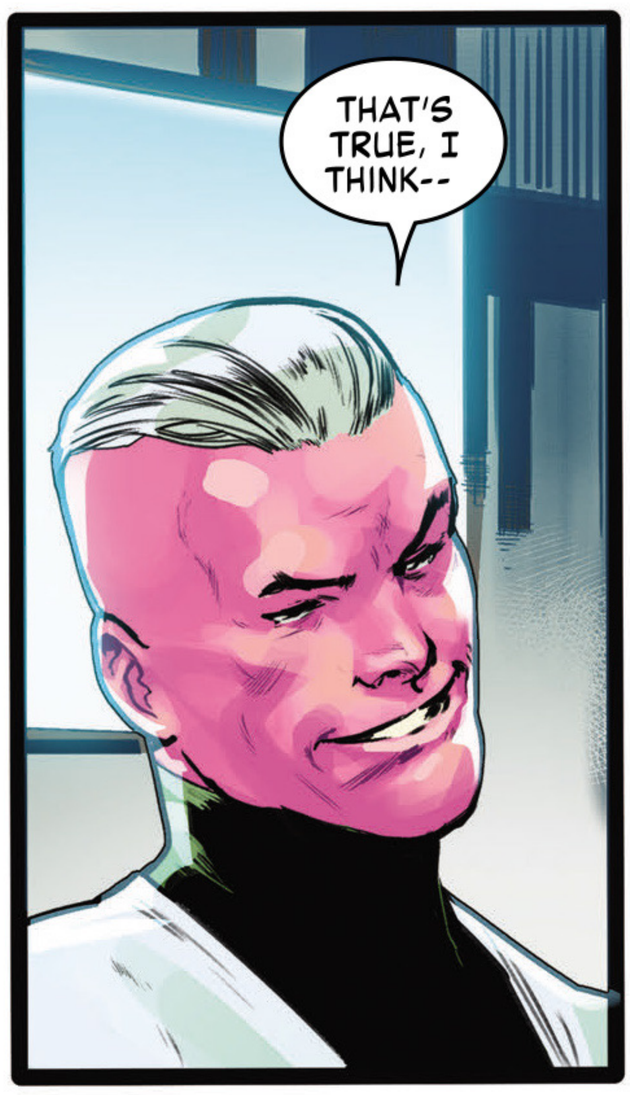
When you use that phrase with a C.E.O., you know you're in for a fight at one of the most beautiful and evil places on Earth…

--AND THAT'S WHY HUMANITY CAN DEPEND ON NIMROD, DR. STASIS AND EVERYONE AT ORCHIS.
STARK UNLIMITED
I PERSONALLY WILL BE OVERSEEING MY PREDECESSOR'S COMPANY AND DEPLOYING THE TECHNOLOGY TO BETTER PROTECT HUMANITY'S INTERESTS.
AH, TONY! I'M SO GLAD YOU RECEIVED MY MESSAGE. WE'RE GOING TO HAVE FUN.
MY NEIGHBOR MARIELLE MARCUS...AND MY FRIEND ZHONG WEI.
THEY'LL BE AVENGED.
DING DING DING!
CONGRATS TO THE NEW OWNER OF STARK UNLIMITED--FEILONG!
THROW YOUR GAUNTLETS IN THE AIR!
EXCUSE ME, TONY. I DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT IS ALL ABOUT, AND I HAVE A LOT TO CELEBRATE.
NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE

STARK UNLIMITED
I HAVE ALWAYS ADMIRED STARK COMPANIES. HOW COULD I NOT?
AND I TAKE IT AS A PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY TO GRAB THE REINS AND RESTORE IT TO ITS GLORY.
WHAT DOES TONY STARK HAVE TO PROVE?
HE GAVE AWAY THE COMPANY. HE DROPPED THE GAUNTLET. I PICKED IT UP.
IT'S TRUE I DIDN'T MAKE MY INTENTIONS CLEAR BECAUSE I DIDN'T WANT SPECULATORS DRIVING UP THE STOCK PRICE--
--BUT IF STARK STILL WANTED TO CHART A COURSE INTO THE FUTURE, HE WOULD SIMPLY STOP ME...

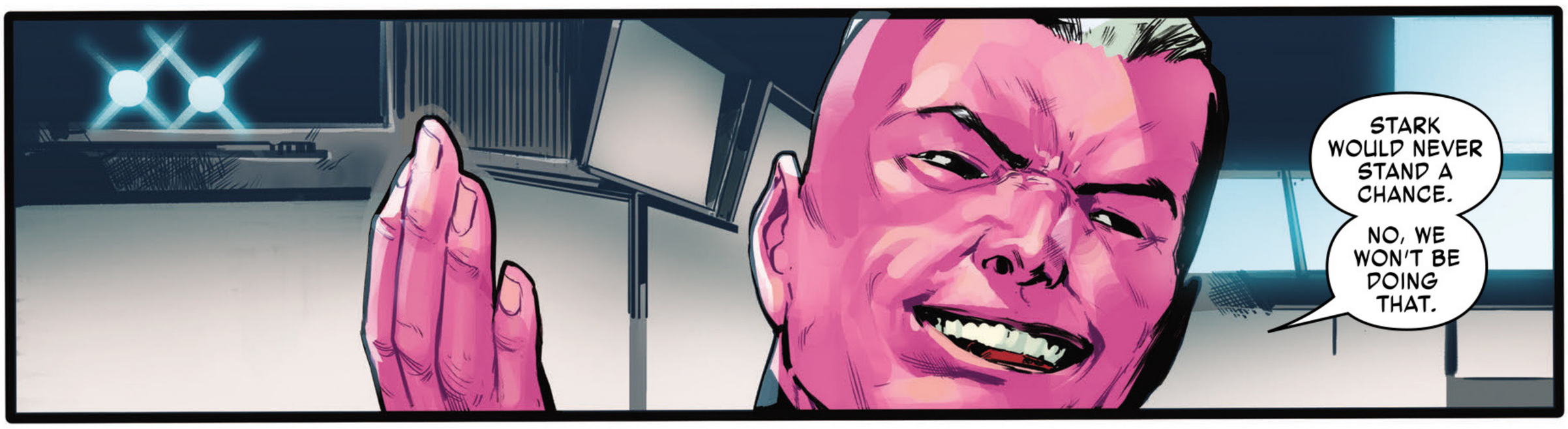

...AND HE'S RIGHT OVER THERE.

ONLY THE "BRAVEST" TRY HOSTILE TAKEOVERS ON STARK COMPANIES.

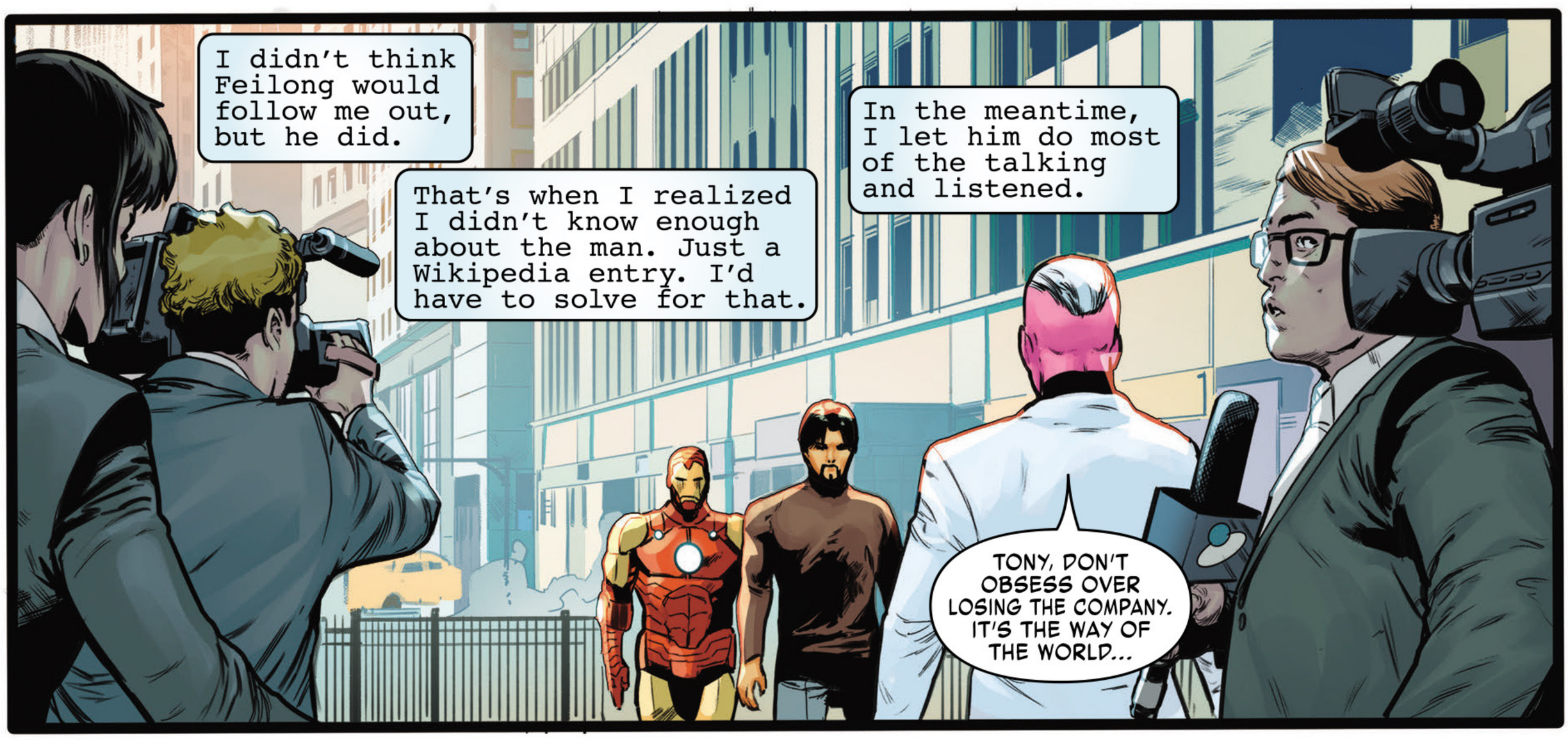

THAT'S TRUE, I THINK--

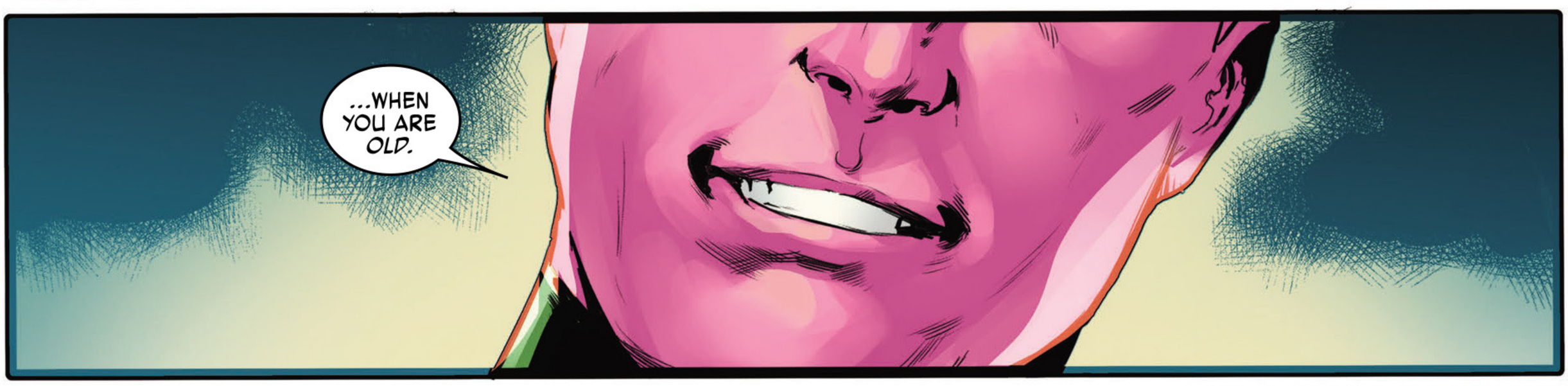
OBADIAH STANE. OF COURSE, HE'S DEAD.
JUSTIN HAMMER, ALSO... DEAD.
JUSTINE HAMMER. DEAD, OR DEAD TO ME--I FORGET.
IT'S A DANGEROUS JOB. HELL, IT ALSO KILLED ME ONCE.

YOU GUYS EVER CONSIDER FIGHTING FOR THE PINK SHEETS?
YEAH!

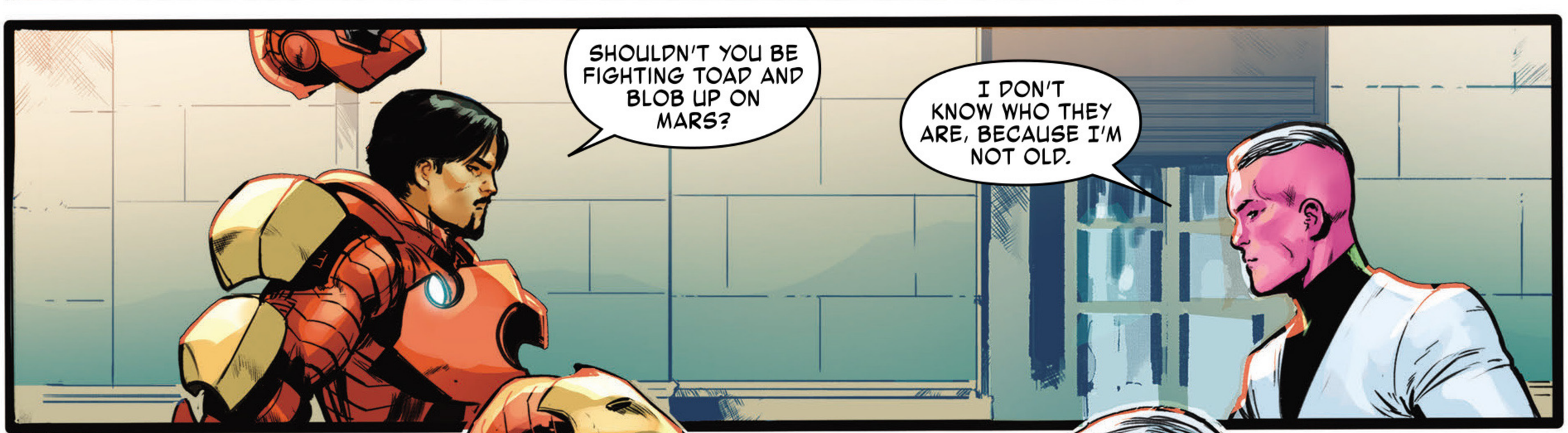

STARK WOULD NEVER STAND A CHANCE.
NO, WE WON'T BE DOING THAT.

MAYBE WE WILL. LET'S STEP OUTSIDE. UNLESS YOU'RE SCARED OF HAVING THE SHORTEST TENURE AS STARK C.E.O. IN HISTORY?

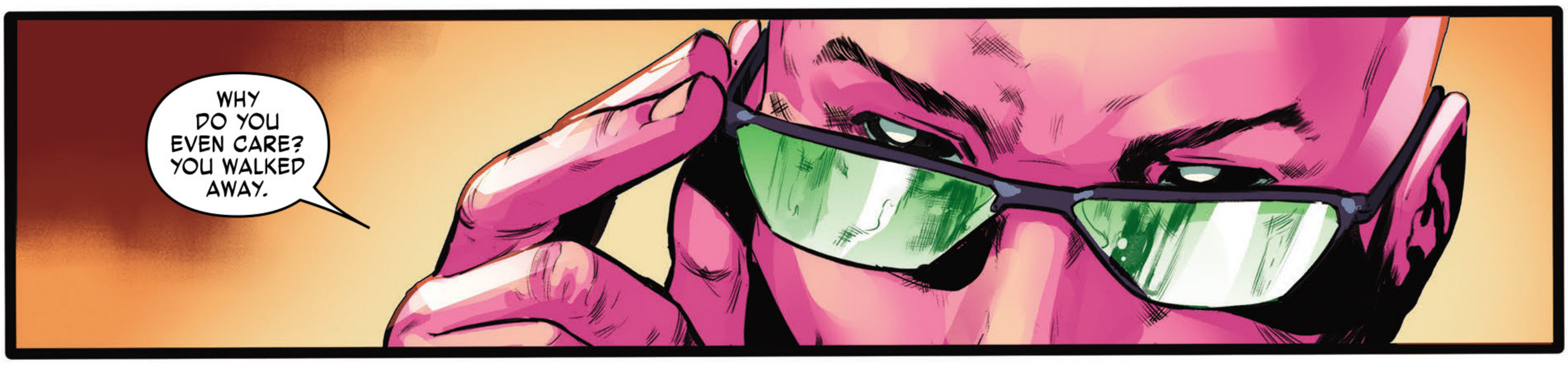

I didn't think Feilong would follow me out, but he did.
That's when I realized I didn't know enough about the man. Just a Wikipedia entry. I'd have to solve for that.
In the meantime, I let him do most of the talking and listened.
TONY, DON'T OBSESS OVER LOSING THE COMPANY. IT'S THE WAY OF THE WORLD...

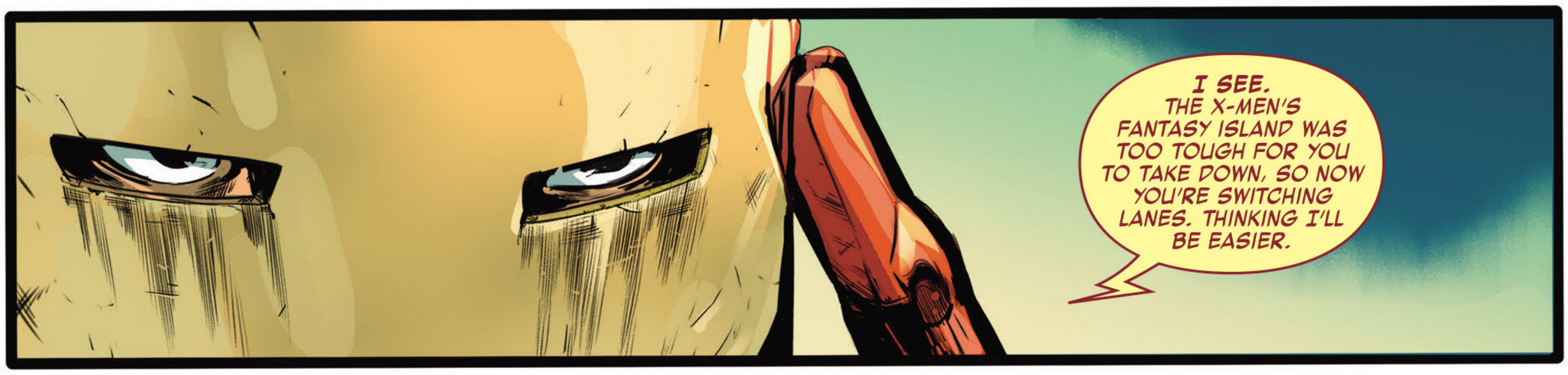

...WHEN YOU ARE OLD.

TWO DEAD THAT I KNOW ABOUT SO FAR. CALL IT QUITS NOW AND MAKE RESTITUTION, OR PREPARE FOR WAR.
THE WAR'S OVER, TONY. YOU LOST.


SHOULDN'T YOU BE FIGHTING TOAD AND BLOB UP ON MARS?
I DON'T KNOW WHO THEY ARE, BECAUSE I'M NOT OLD.

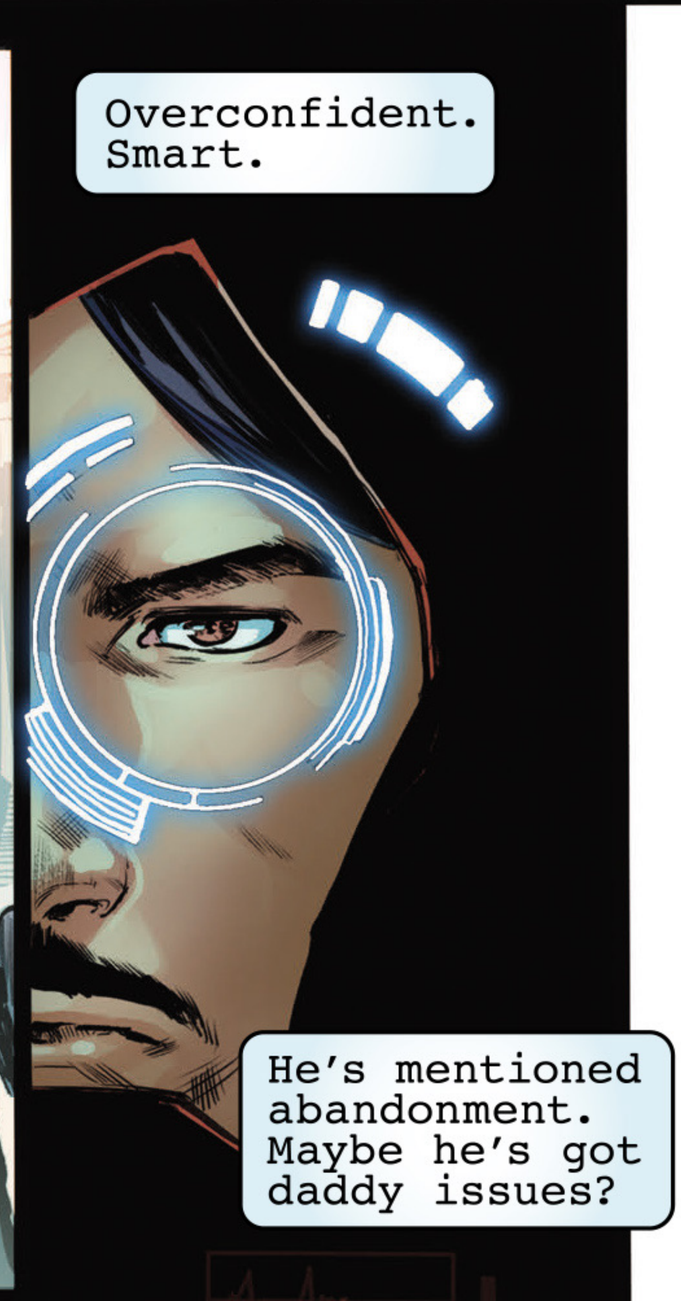
TOUCHE.
WHAT DO YOU EVEN WANT WITH STARK UNLIMITED?
I WANT TO MAKE IT GREAT AGAIN.

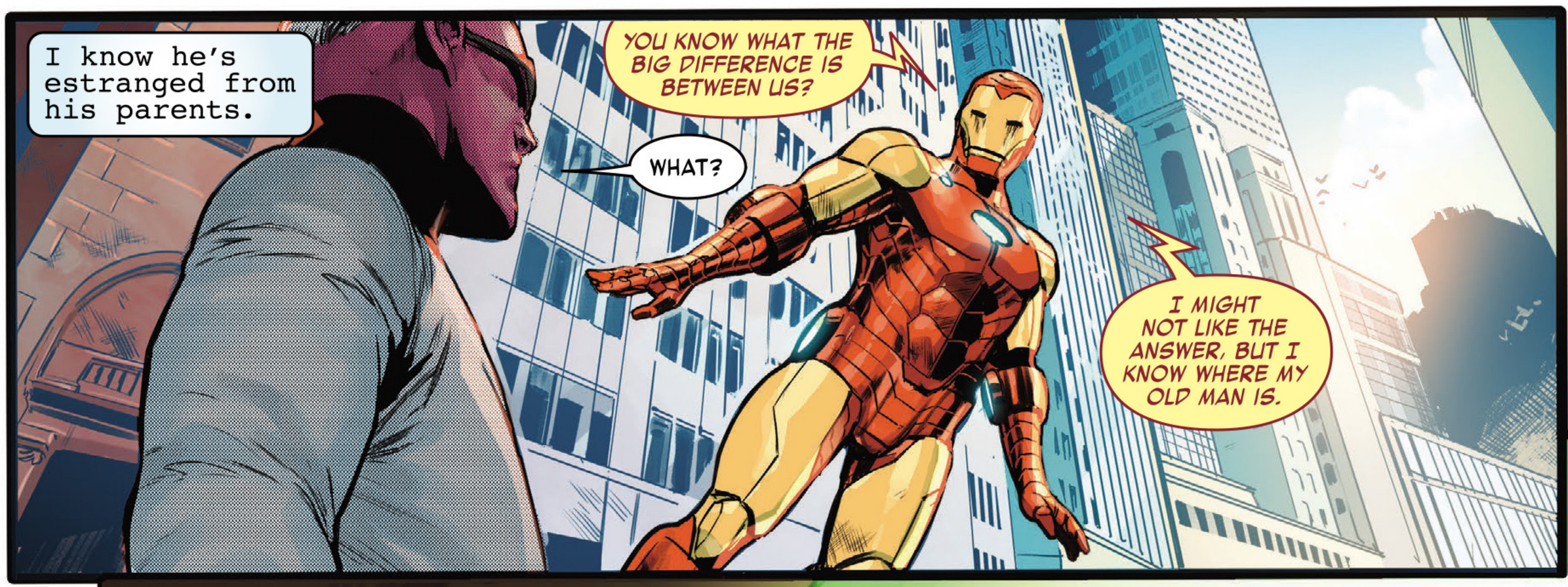

WHY DO YOU EVEN CARE? YOU WALKED AWAY.

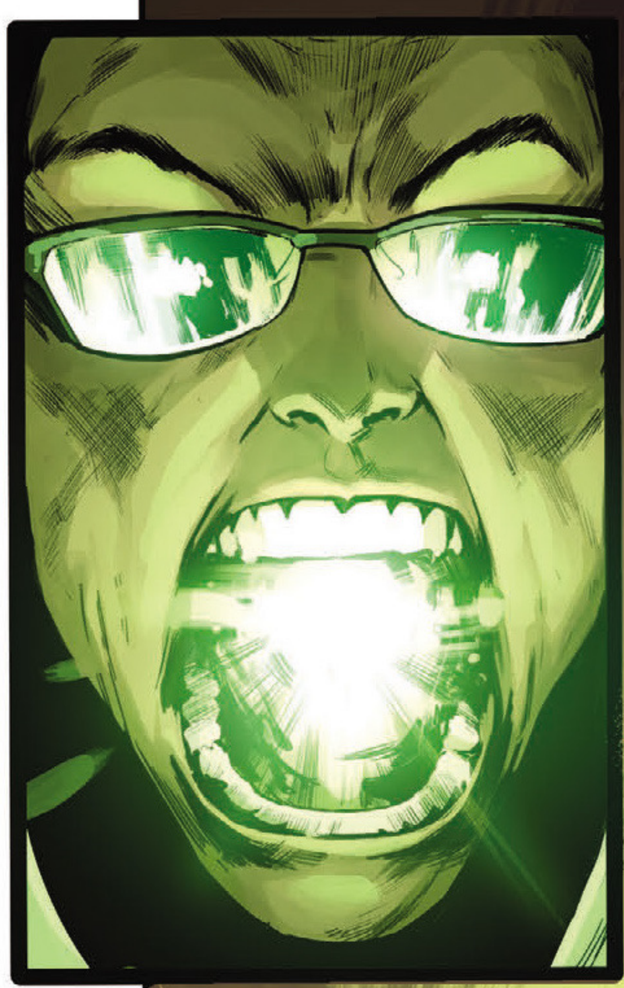

I SEE. THE X-MEN'S FANTASY ISLAND WAS TOO TOUGH FOR YOU TO TAKE DOWN, SO NOW YOU'RE SWITCHING LANES. THINKING I'LL BE EASIER.

HA HA HA!

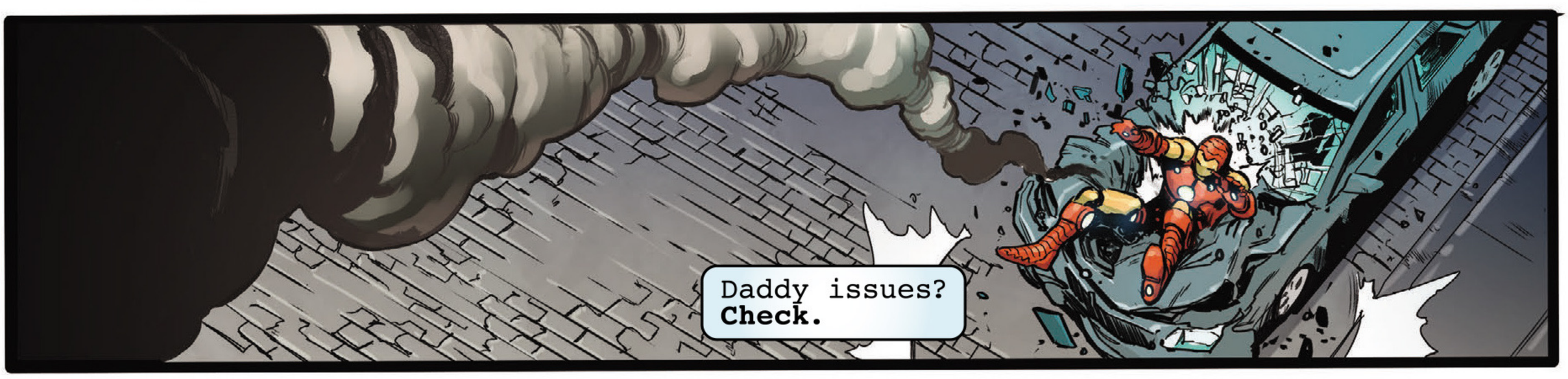
THAT'S RICH.
THE MUTANTS HAVE ALREADY BEEN DEFEATED. AND WE COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT THEM.
THAT'S A PARTY FOR ANOTHER DAY.


Overconfident. Smart.
He's mentioned abandonment. Maybe he's got daddy issues?

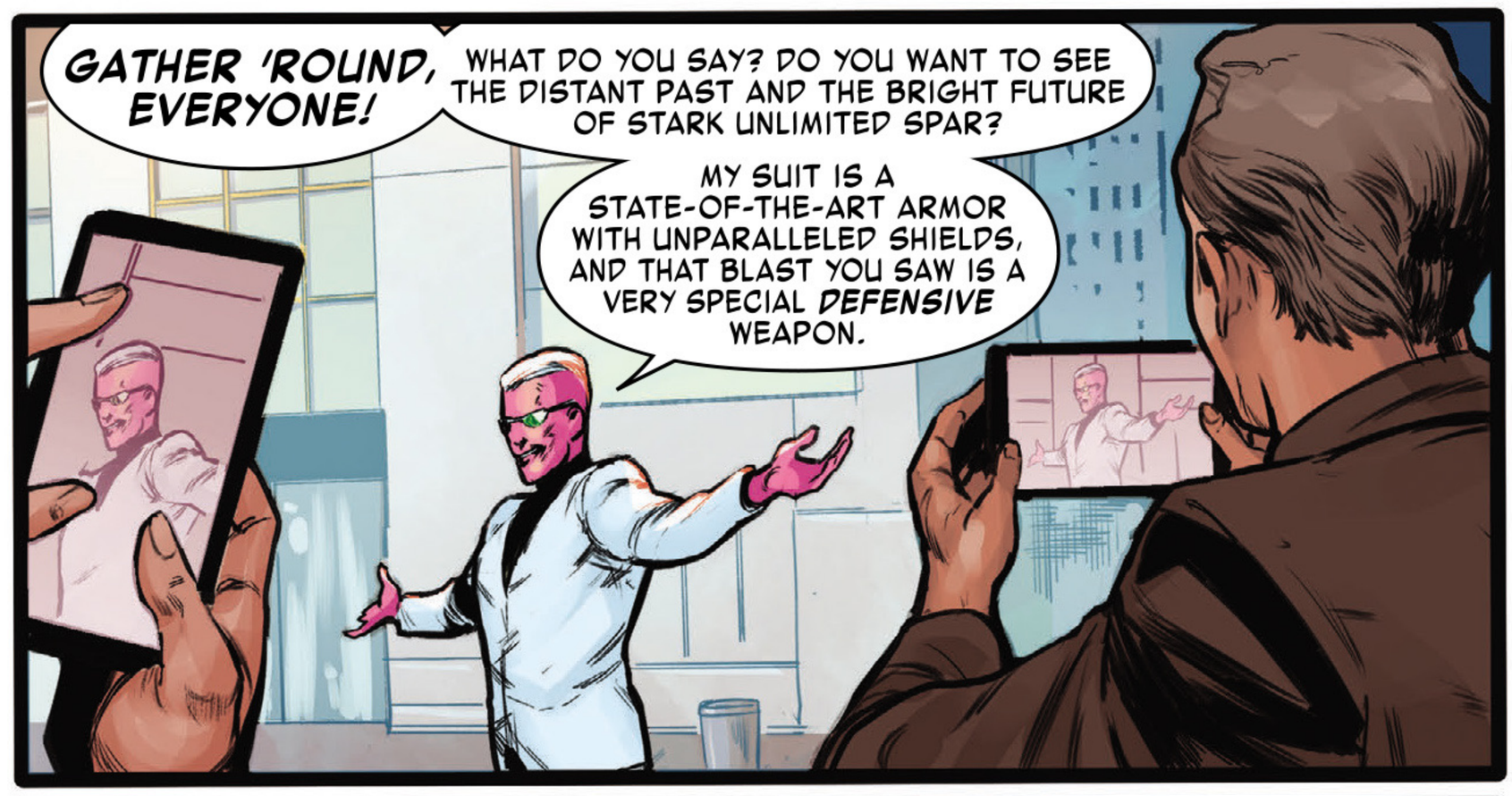

I know he's estranged from his parents.
YOU KNOW WHAT THE BIG DIFFERENCE IS BETWEEN US?
WHAT?
I MIGHT NOT LIKE THE ANSWER, BUT I KNOW WHERE MY OLD MAN IS.

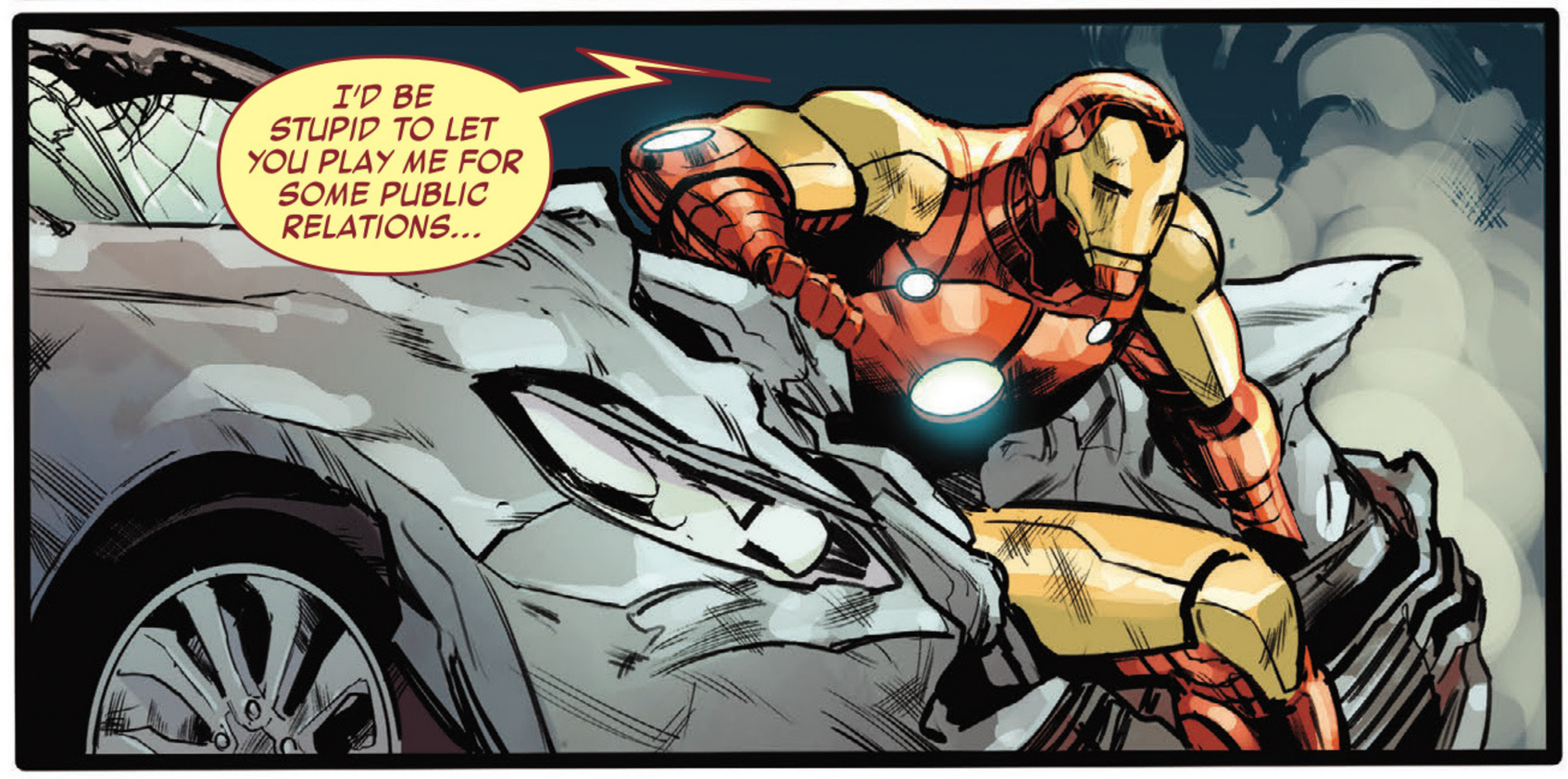


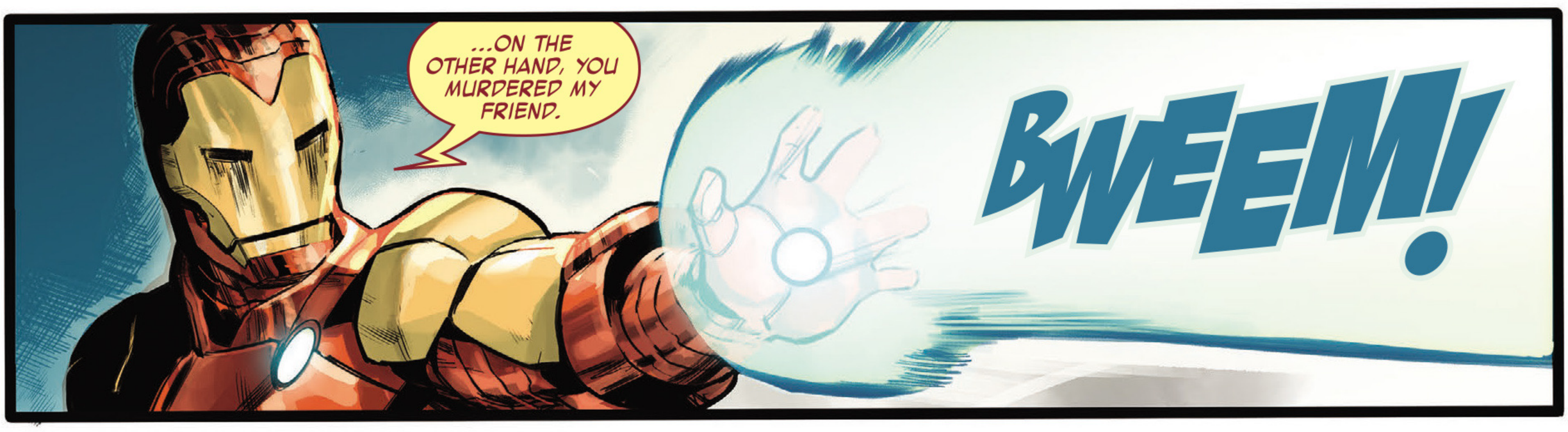
ZAP!


Daddy issues? **Check.**

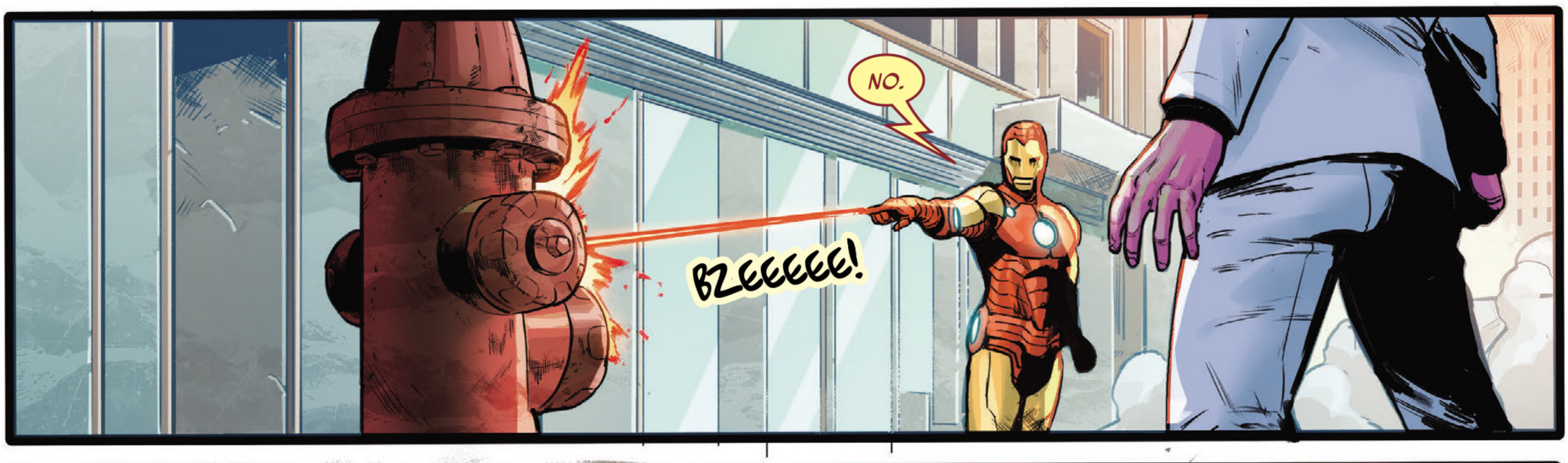
I SHOULD KNOW MYSELF BETTER THAN THAT.
WELL PLAYED, STARK. THAT WAS ALMOST AN UNFORCED ERROR.
NOW TO MAKE LEMONADE, I SUPPOSE.


GATHER 'ROUND, EVERYONE!
WHAT DO YOU SAY? DO YOU WANT TO SEE THE DISTANT PAST AND THE BRIGHT FUTURE OF STARK UNLIMITED SPAR?
MY SUIT IS A STATE-OF-THE-ART ARMOR WITH UNPARALLELED SHIELDS, AND THAT BLAST YOU SAW IS A VERY SPECIAL DEFENSIVE WEAPON.

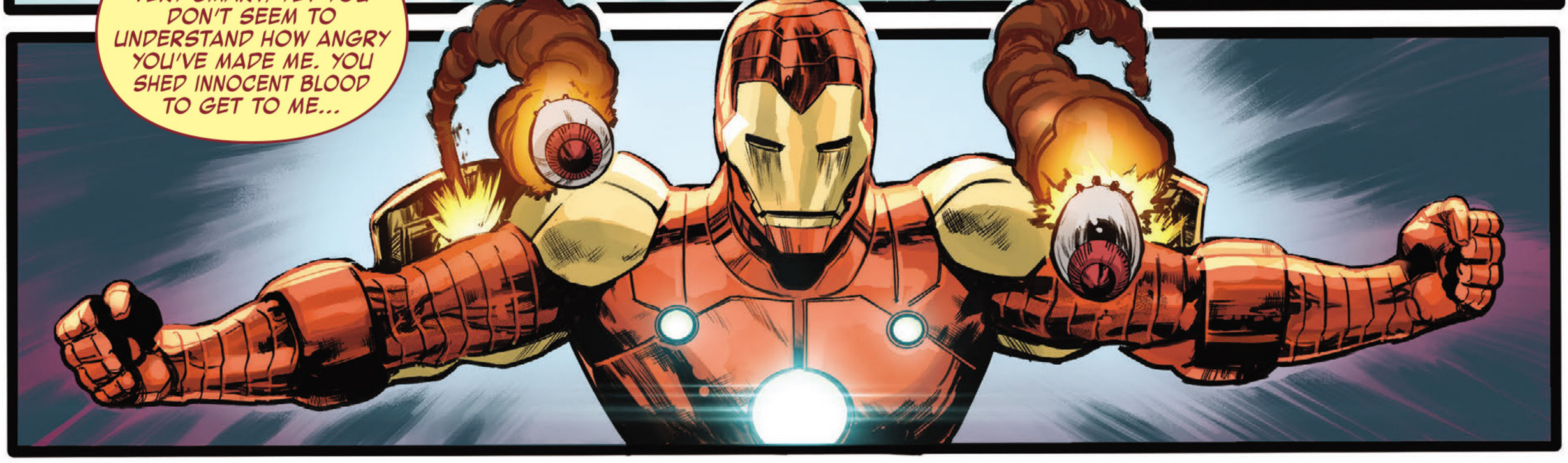

I'D BE STUPID TO LET YOU PLAY ME FOR SOME PUBLIC RELATIONS...


...ON THE OTHER HAND, YOU MURDERED MY FRIEND.
BWEEM!

IS THAT THE BEST YOU CAN DO?


NO.
BZEEEEEE!

AAH!
WOOSH!


YOU LEGITIMATELY ARE VERY SMART, YET YOU DON'T SEEM TO UNDERSTAND HOW ANGRY YOU'VE MADE ME. YOU SHED INNOCENT BLOOD TO GET TO ME...

BOOM!

...I DON'T HAVE A LOT OF FRIENDS, AND YOU TOOK ONE.
YOU WERE ABANDONED. ORPHANED BY YOUR PARENTS...AND THAT IS WHAT YOU LEARNED. TO QUIT AND WALK AWAY.

I CAST MY PARENTS OUT. THEY WERE HOLDING ME BACK.
MY OFFER IS SIMPLE: FIGHT FOR HUMANITY. FIGHT FOR YOUR COMPANY.
FIGHT FOR YOUR LEGACY.
IF IT'S THE COMPANY YOU CARE FOR--YOU CAN EARN IT BACK.
WE CAN NEGOTIATE A SCENARIO WHERE IT EVEN LOOKS LIKE YOU BESTED ME.
IT WILL BE GOOD FOR STABILITY. A NEW TECHNOLOGICAL COLD WAR WOULD BENEFIT ALL OF HUMANITY...AFTER WE DO THE HARD THINGS THAT MUST BE DONE.
WHAT DO YOU SAY, STARK?
I SAY... LET'S STRESS TEST THOSE "UNPARALLELED" SHIELDS, SHALL WE?

CRUNCH
I don't know Feilong, but… I know who he wants to be.
The man in the tower deciding what happens below.
The guy who thought he was going to be Earth's first real "off-worlder."
The fact that he's gotten as far as he has is a problem. My head was in the clouds. Looking for invading Frost Giants or invading Celestials or--well, you get the picture.
I had to do it, but I'm **pissed** I put the business on autopilot.
RELAX, I GOT YOU.
SCHOOL BUS
WHOOPS.

AAARGH!
DID EVERYONE RECORD THAT?
OR DO YOU NEED ANOTHER TAKE?
DON'T WORRY--THESE ARE NONLETHAL.
USUALLY.
PMPH
PMPH
PMPH
PMPH
PMPH
PMPH
NNGH!
KRAKOOM!
THIS HAS BEEN FUN, BUT I HAVE WORK TO DO.

It took years and a fortune (and if you've read this far, you know that I had both), but I figured out a way to reset every electronic device inside a certain radius.

It allowed me to deliver terms in **private.**

IMPRESSIVE.

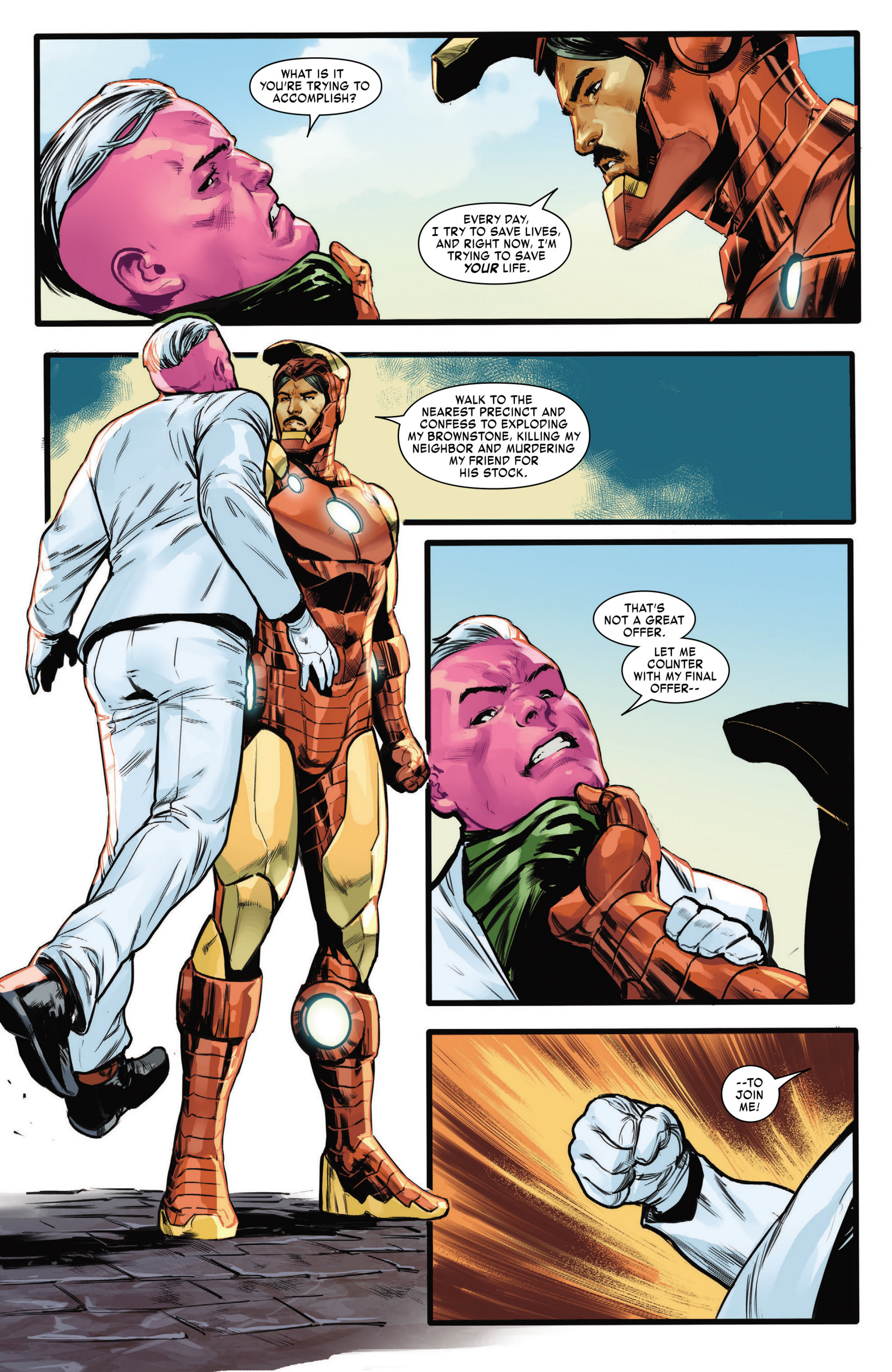
I GOT A FEW SURPRISES UP ARMOR SLEEVES YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT YET.

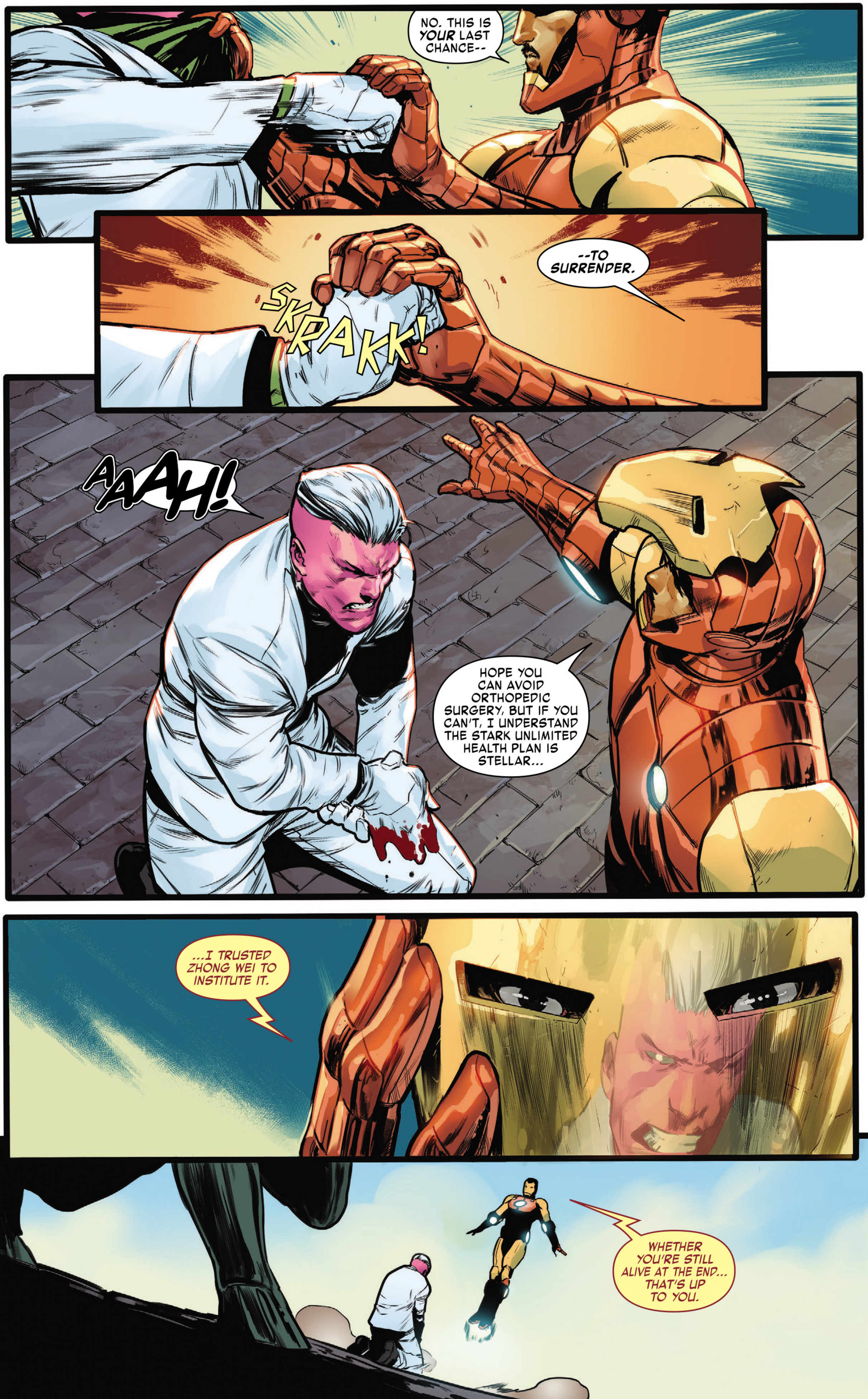
ACK!

I GET IT. YOU HAD YOUR HEART BROKEN. THE MUTANTS STOLE MARS FROM YOU, AND YOU WANT YOUR POUND OF FLESH.

YOU'RE MAD AT ME FOR SOME DELUSION THAT I HELD MARS...BUT I'LL BE DAMNED IF I'LL LET YOU USE MY CREATIONS TO HURT ANYONE.

EVEN STANE AND HAMMER WERE SMART ENOUGH TO LEAVE THE FEW FRIENDS AND FAMILY I HAVE OUT OF BUSINESS.


WHAT IS IT YOU'RE TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH?
EVERY DAY, I TRY TO SAVE LIVES, AND RIGHT NOW, I'M TRYING TO SAVE YOUR LIFE.
WALK TO THE NEAREST PRECINCT AND CONFESS TO EXPLODING MY BROWNSTONE, KILLING MY NEIGHBOR AND MURDERING MY FRIEND FOR HIS STOCK.
THAT'S NOT A GREAT OFFER.
LET ME COUNTER WITH MY FINAL OFFER--
--TO JOIN ME!


NO. THIS IS YOUR LAST CHANCE--
--TO SURRENDER.
SKRAKK!
AAAH!
HOPE YOU CAN AVOID ORTHOPEDIC SURGERY, BUT IF YOU CAN'T, I UNDERSTAND THE STARK UNLIMITED HEALTH PLAN IS STELLAR...
...I TRUSTED ZHONG WEI TO INSTITUTE IT.
WHETHER YOU'RE STILL ALIVE AT THE END... THAT'S UP TO YOU.

OH, TONY.
I THINK PERHAPS YOU ARE THE ONE I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR.

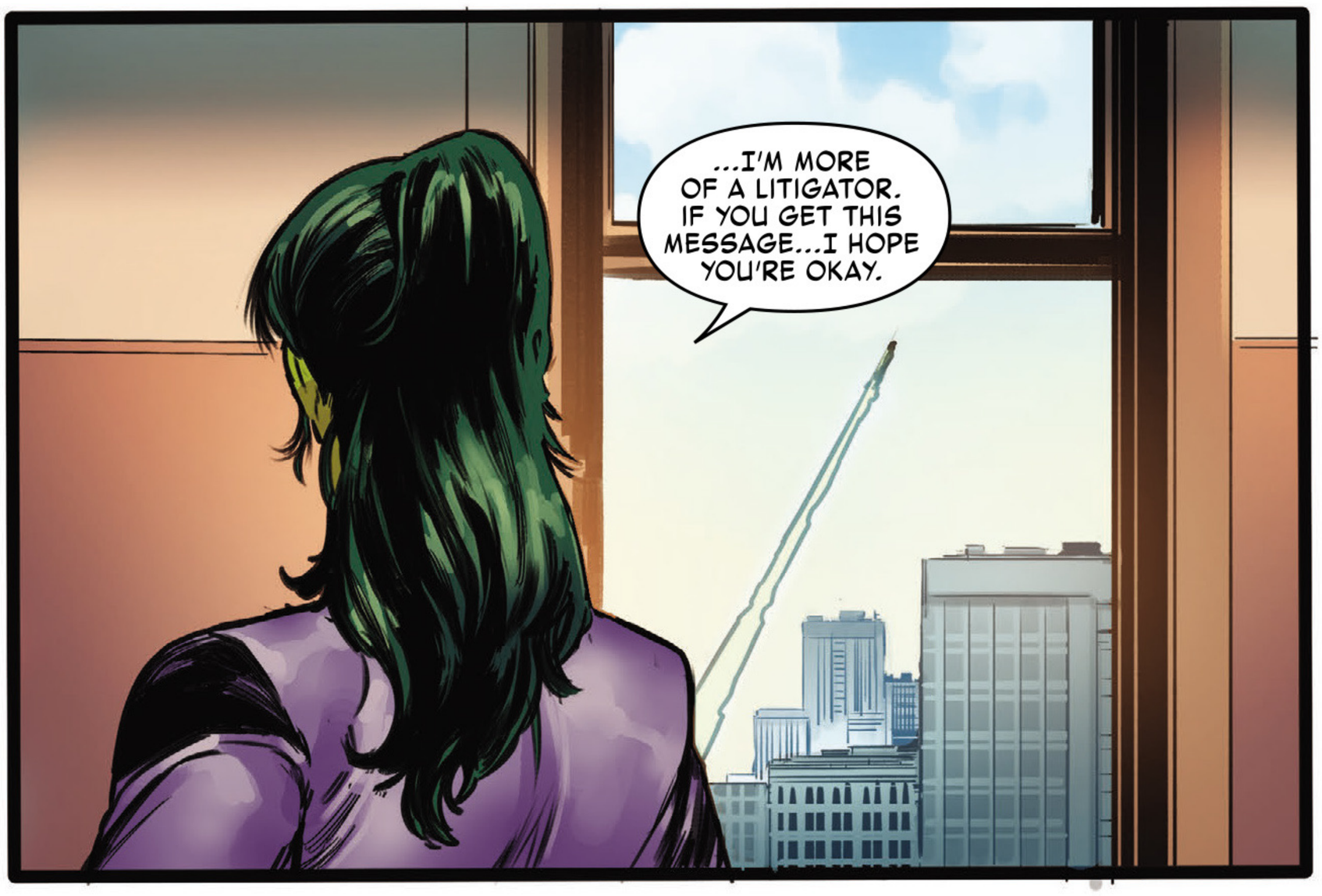
I wanted to scare Feilong into confessing, not dissemble him, but it was clear we're going to do this the hard way, so I put on the afterburners before I did something I'll regret.
HA HA HA HA!
FINALLY!

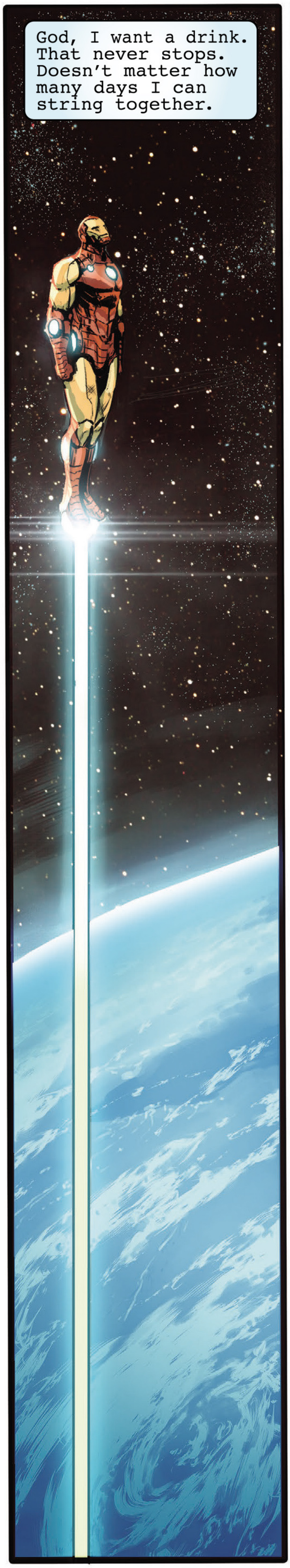
I HAVE A *WORTHY* NEMESIS.

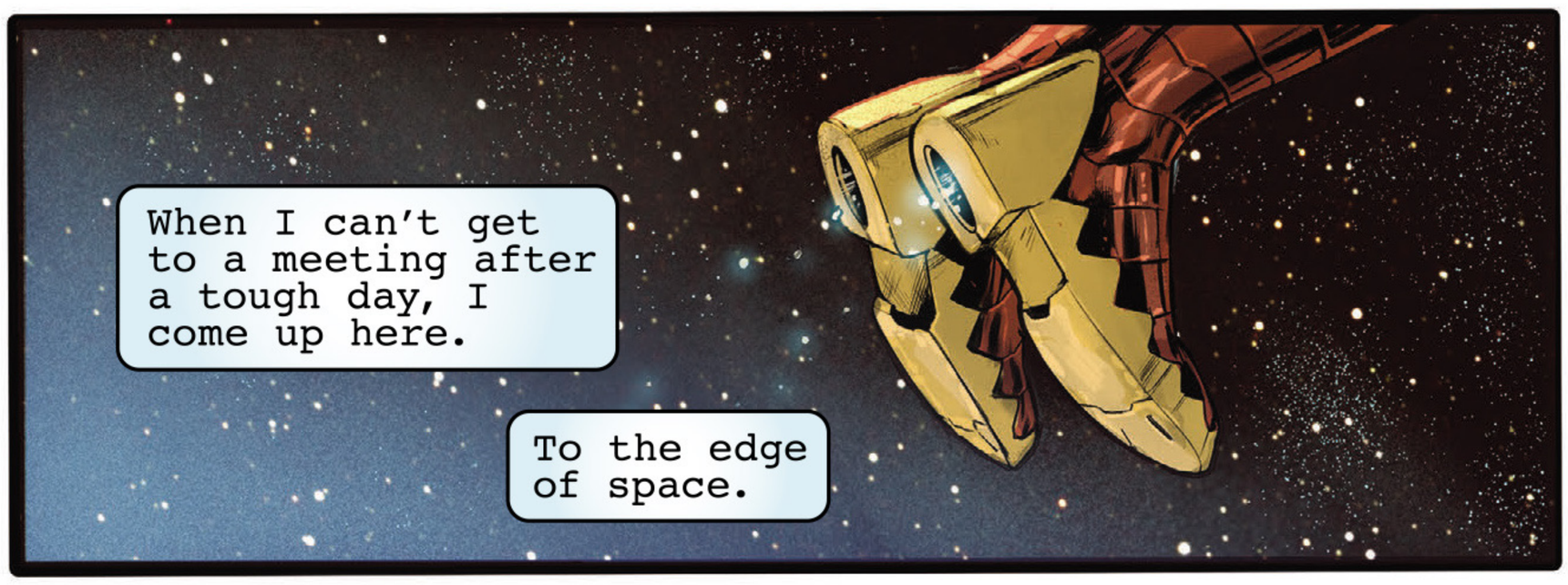
AT THE LAW OFFICES OF JEN WALTERS, A.K.A. SHE-HULK.

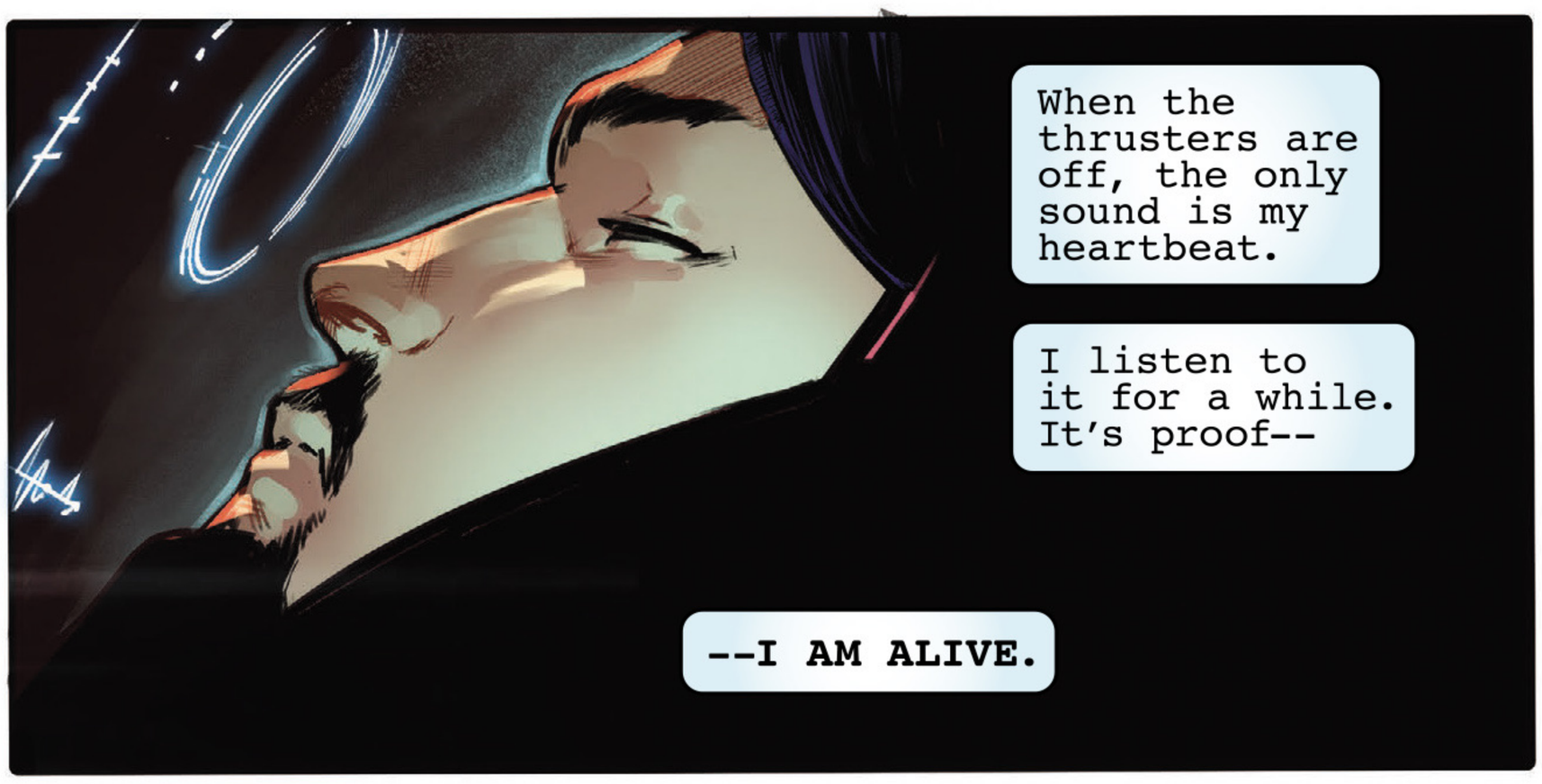
TONY, CALL ME BACK. YOU JUST GOT SOME C&Ds FROM THE NEW OWNERS OF YOUR OLD COMPANY.
COURT REVIEWED AUDIT OF TECHNOLOGY IN THE "IRON MAN" SUIT

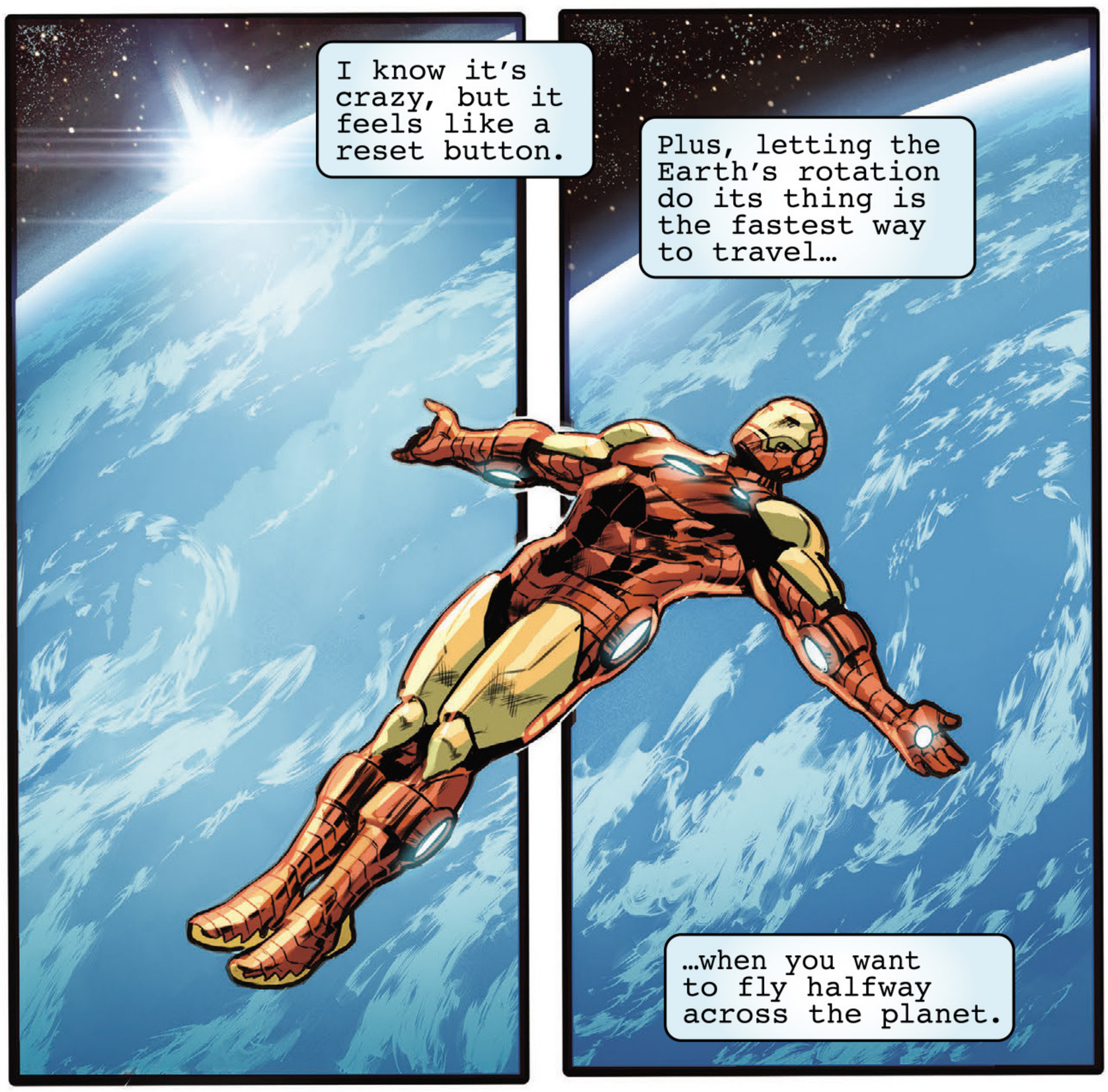
I'M NOT SAYING I WON'T BE ENOUGH FOR YOU, BUT I THINK YOU MAY NEED AN *INTELLECTUAL-PROPERTY* SPECIALIST AND...

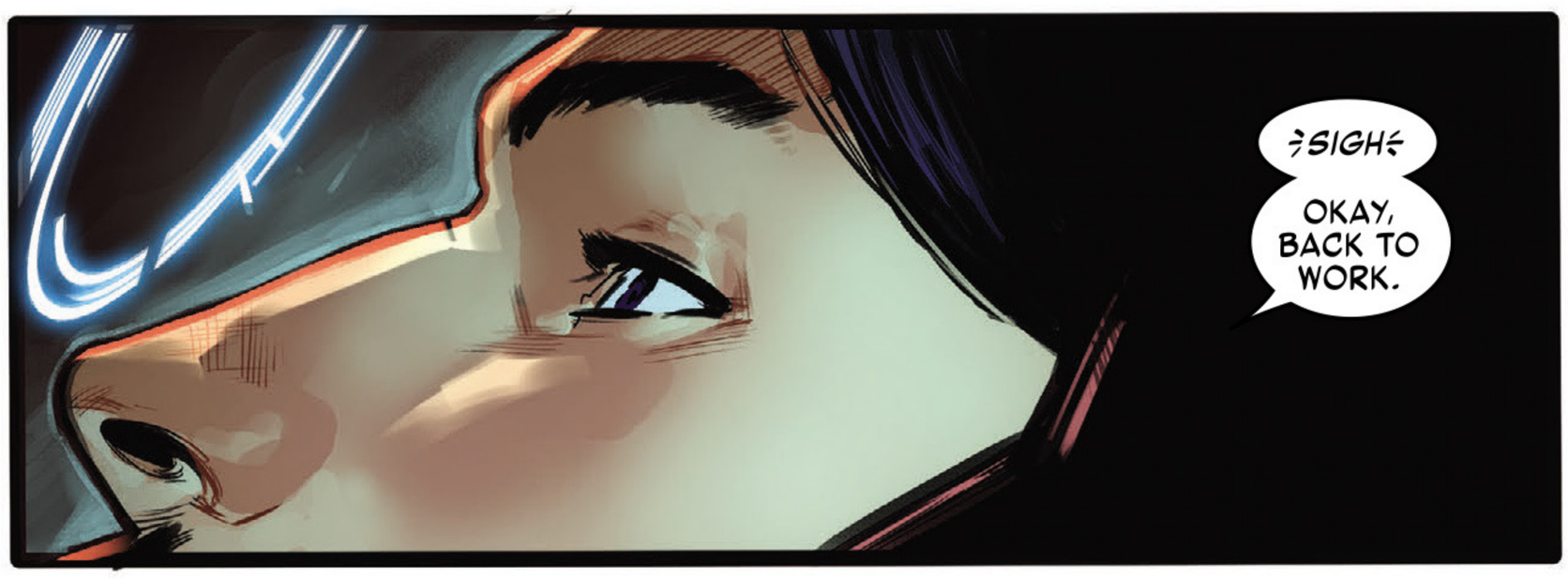

...I'M MORE OF A LITIGATOR. IF YOU GET THIS MESSAGE...I HOPE YOU'RE OKAY.

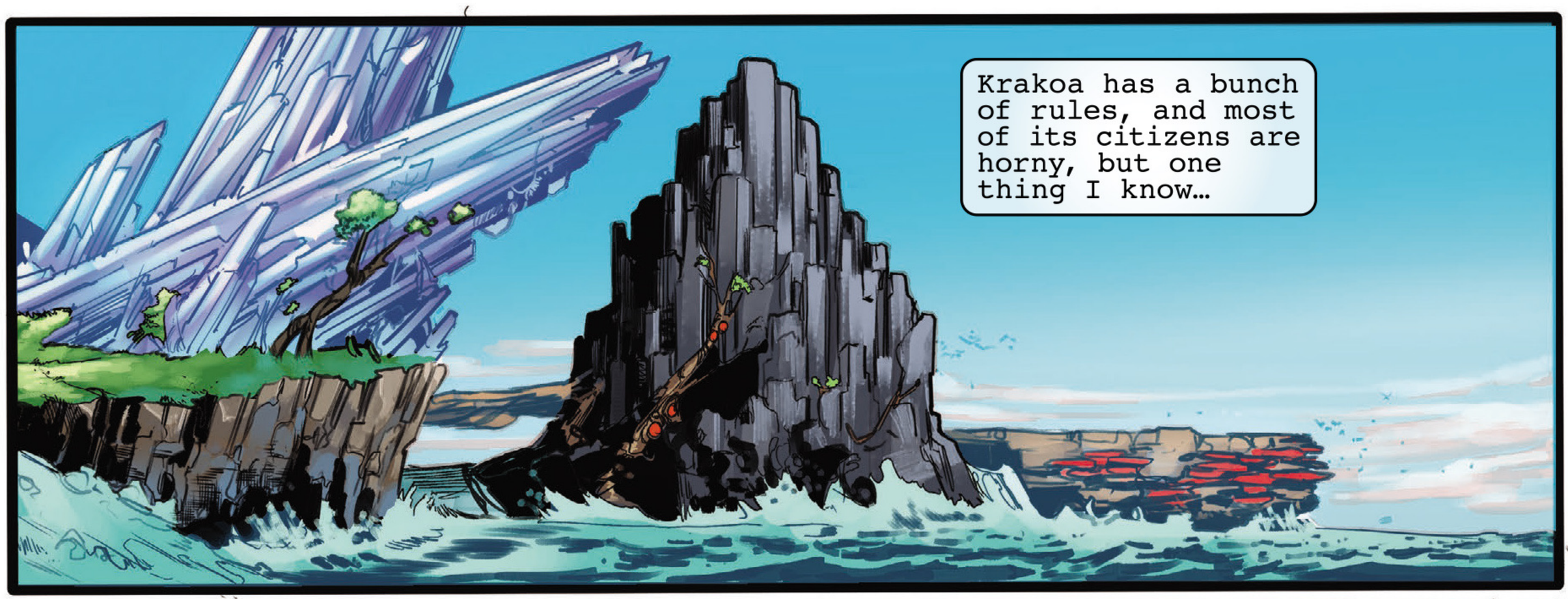

God, I want a drink. That never stops. Doesn't matter how many days I can string together.

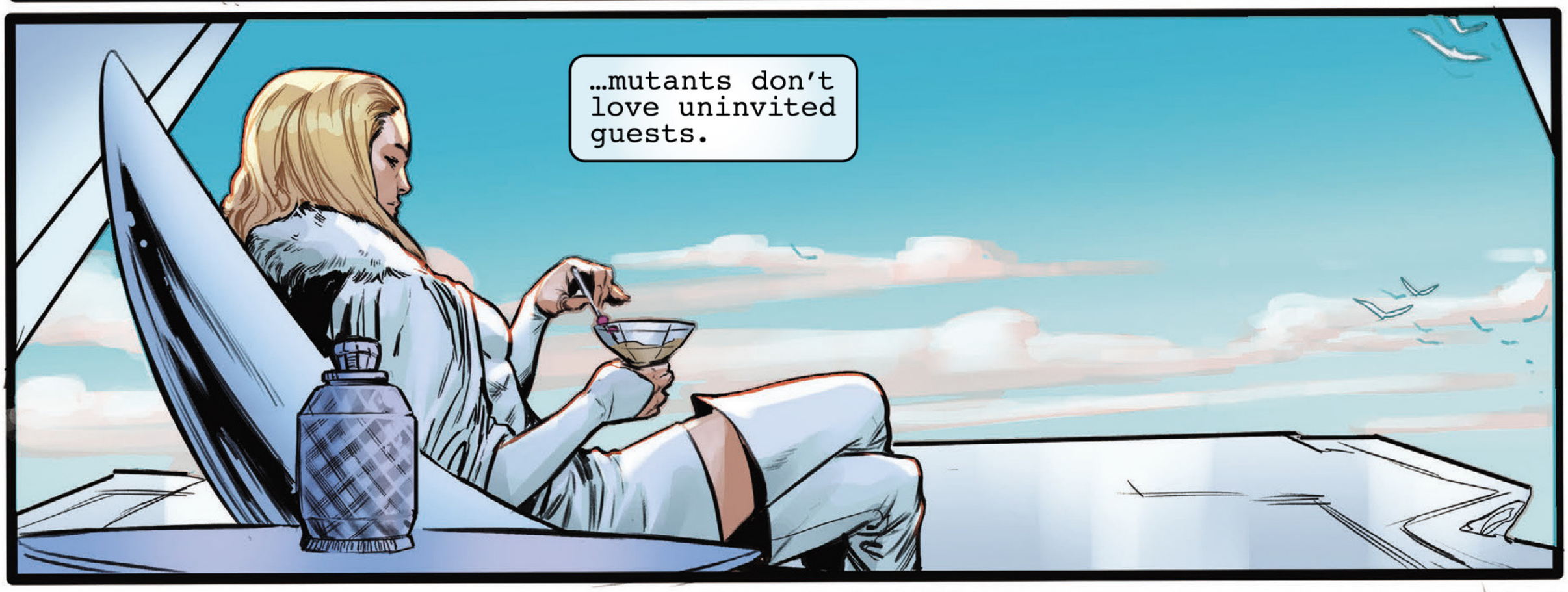

When I can't get to a meeting after a tough day, I come up here.
To the edge of space.

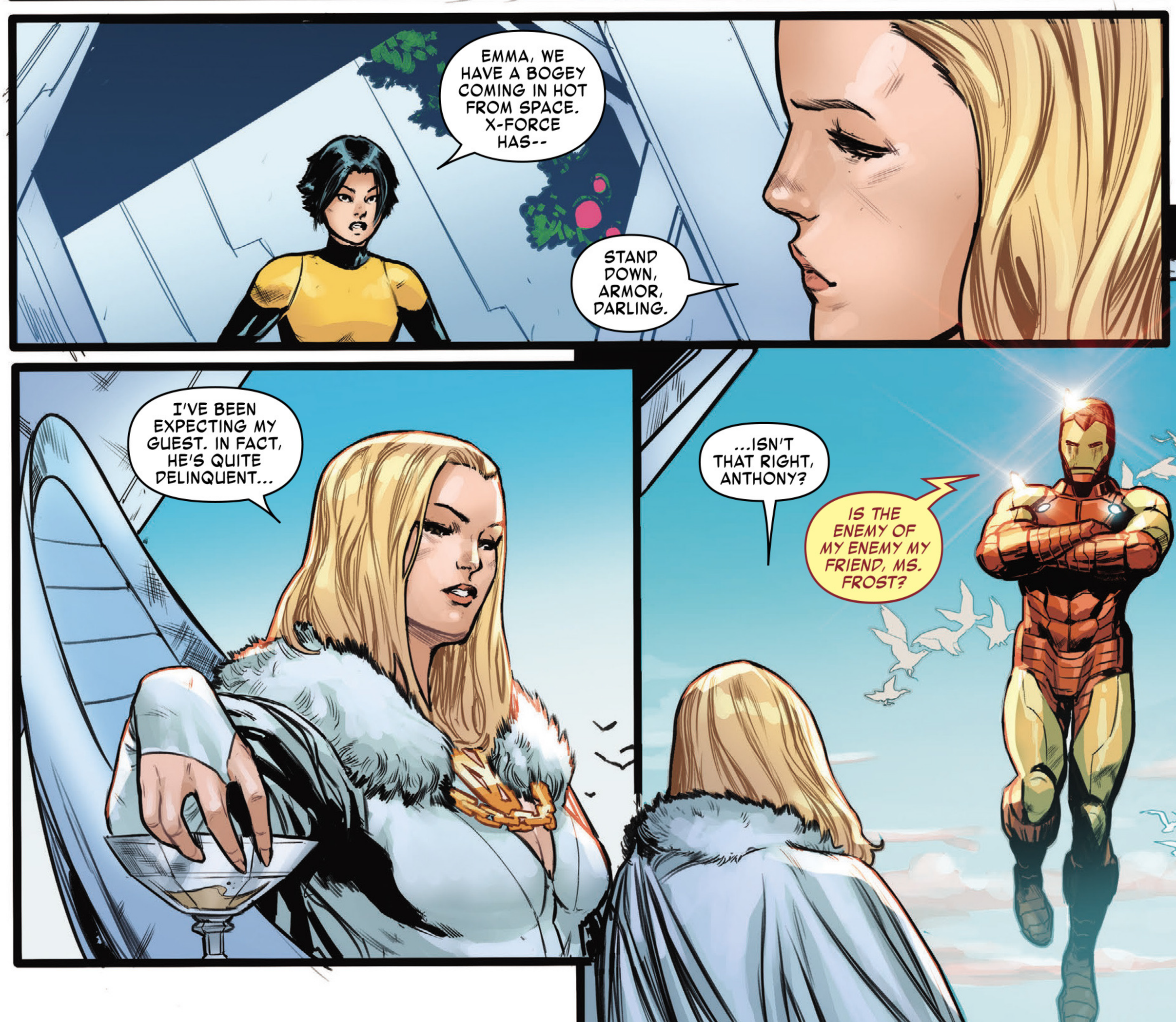

When the thrusters are off, the only sound is my heartbeat.
I listen to it for a while. It's proof--
--I AM ALIVE.


I know it's crazy, but it feels like a reset button.
Plus, letting the Earth's rotation do its thing is the fastest way to travel…
…when you want to fly halfway across the planet.


SIGH
OKAY, BACK TO WORK.


Krakoa has a bunch of rules, and most of its citizens are horny, but one thing I know…


…mutants don't love uninvited guests.


EMMA, WE HAVE A BOGEY COMING IN HOT FROM SPACE. X-FORCE HAS--
STAND DOWN, ARMOR, DARLING.
I'VE BEEN EXPECTING MY GUEST. IN FACT, HE'S QUITE DELINQUENT...
...ISN'T THAT RIGHT, ANTHONY?
IS THE ENEMY OF MY ENEMY MY FRIEND, MS. FROST?

FIVE
Step aside, darling...

HELLFIRE BAY, KRAKOA.

FEILONG BRAGGED THAT "THE MUTANTS WERE ALREADY DEFEATED," BUT THAT YOU DIDN'T KNOW IT YET. JUST DOING MY DUE DILIGENCE.

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED HE'S REALIZED HE BIT OFF MORE THAN HE CAN CHEW WITH KRAKOA AND HIS MARS DREAMS...

...AND IS ZEROING IN ON MORE... MANAGEABLE PREY?

CONSIDER ME HUMBLED, EMMA. YOU SAID YOU HAD MORE INFORMATION FOR ME?

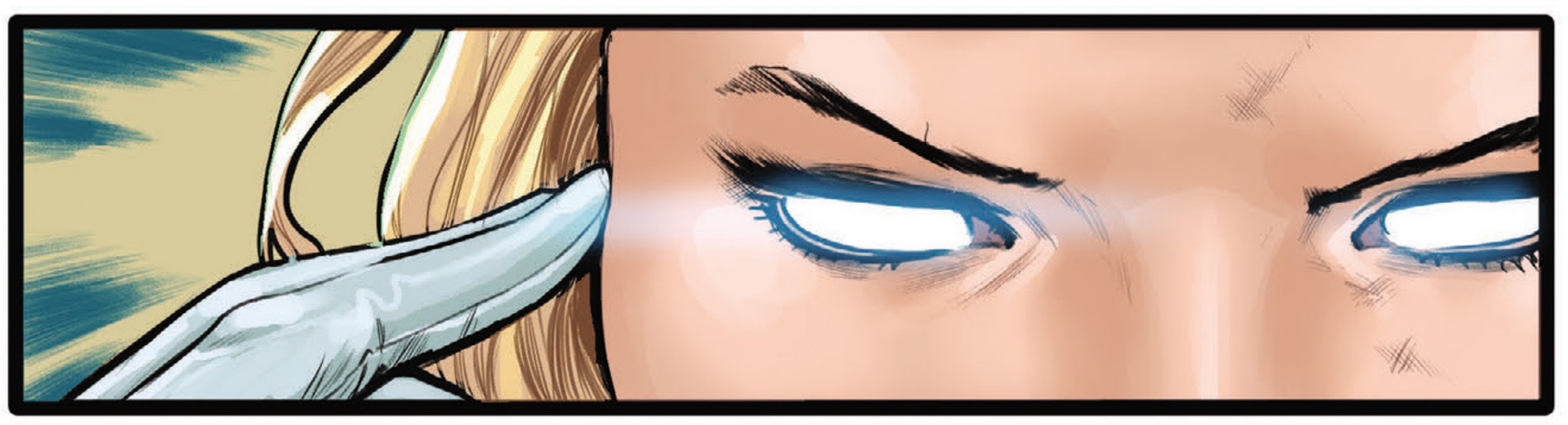
I DO NOT, BUT *SUNFIRE* DOES.

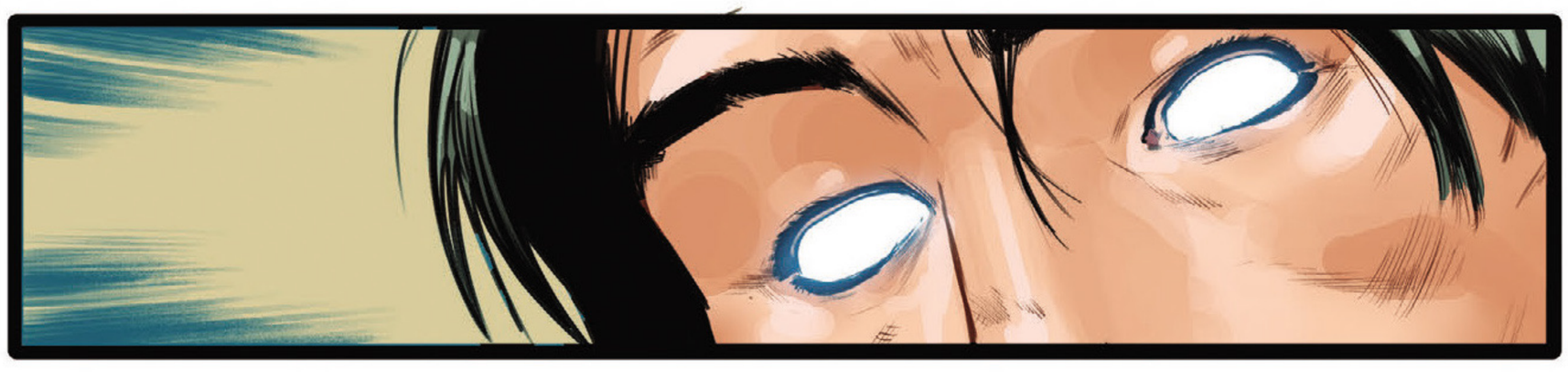
I DON'T HAVE LONG. I'M LEAVING FOR OTHERWORLD SOON.

HELLO, SHIRO.

OUR GUEST, ANTHONY, HAS COME FOR A DOWNLOAD OF YOUR ALTERCATION WITH FEILONG ON PHOBOS. MAY I?

OF COURSE. AS AN X-MAN OF KRAKOA, I AM OF SERVICE.





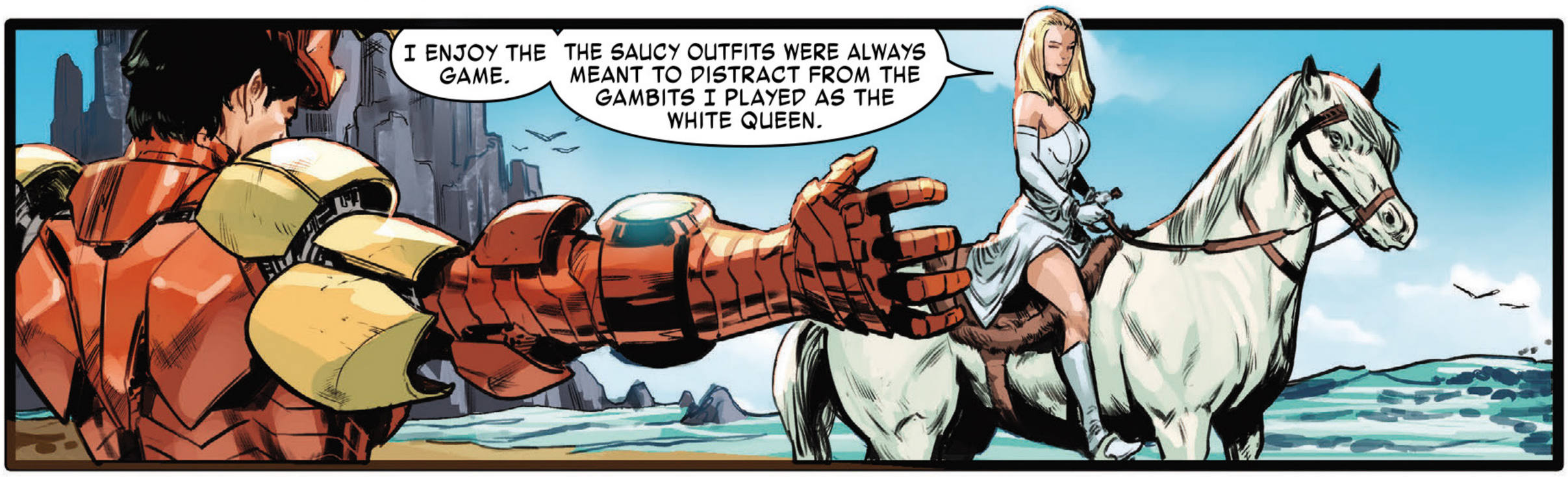
"I FIRST ENCOUNTERED HIM ON THE LARGER MOON OF WHAT YOU CALL MARS. HE...WAS NO MERE MAN.

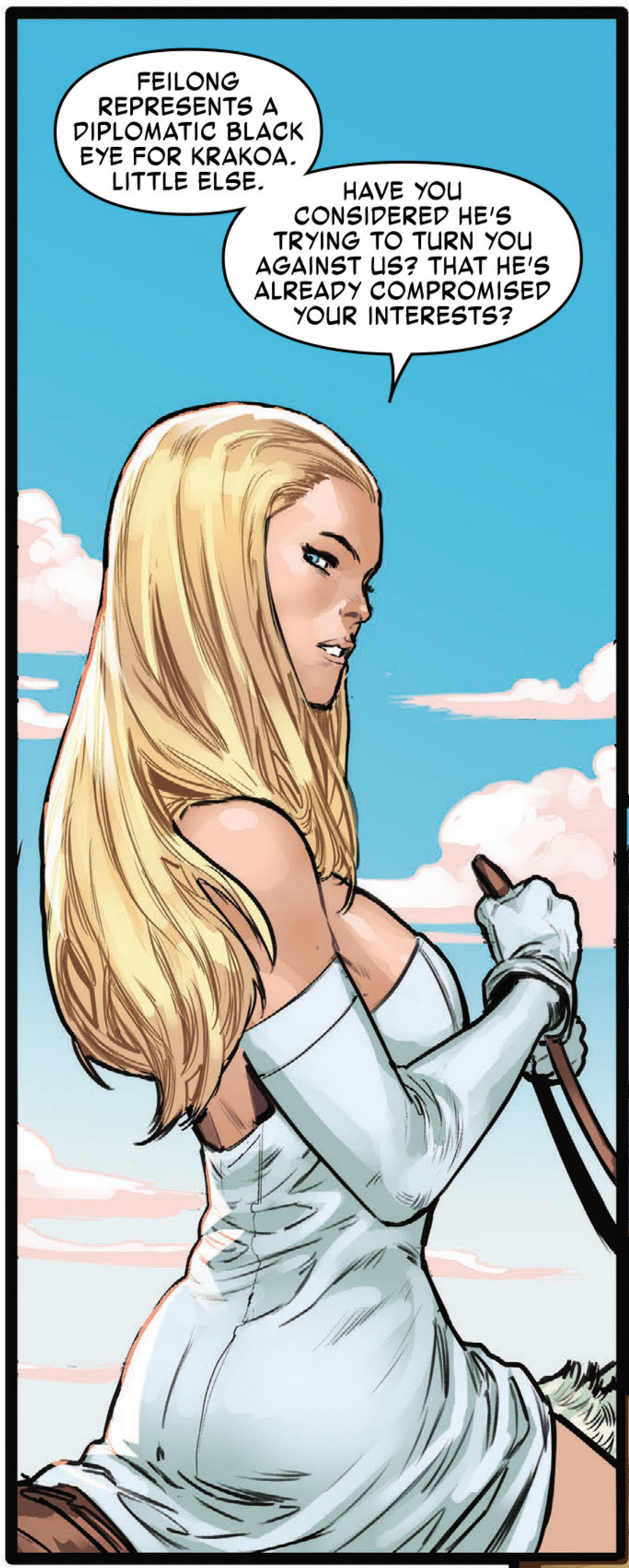
"HE KILLED A WARRIOR WHOSE ADVENTURES FILLED AN ENTIRE SCROLL OF SONGS. I TOLD HIM I COULDN'T PROTECT HIM ON THIS NEW MUTANT WORLD. HE DIDN'T CARE."*

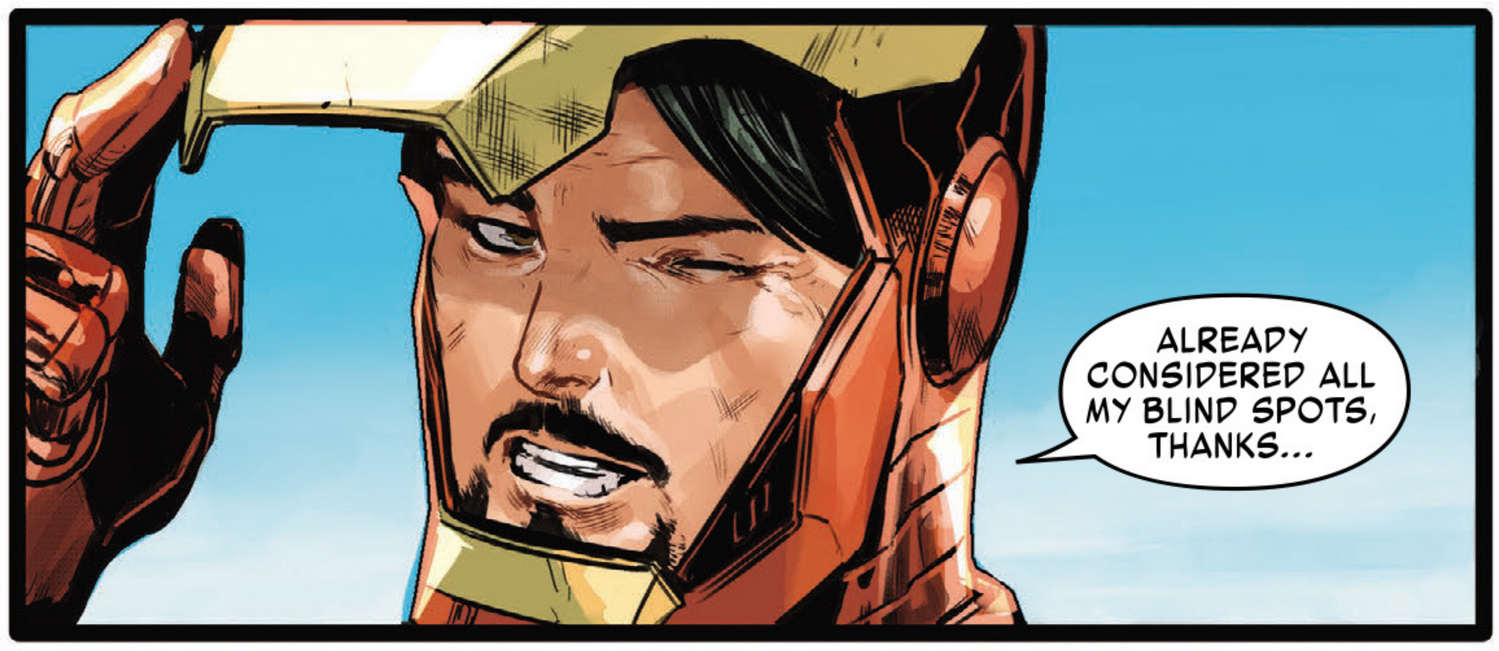
*SEE X-MEN (2021) #6! --DS

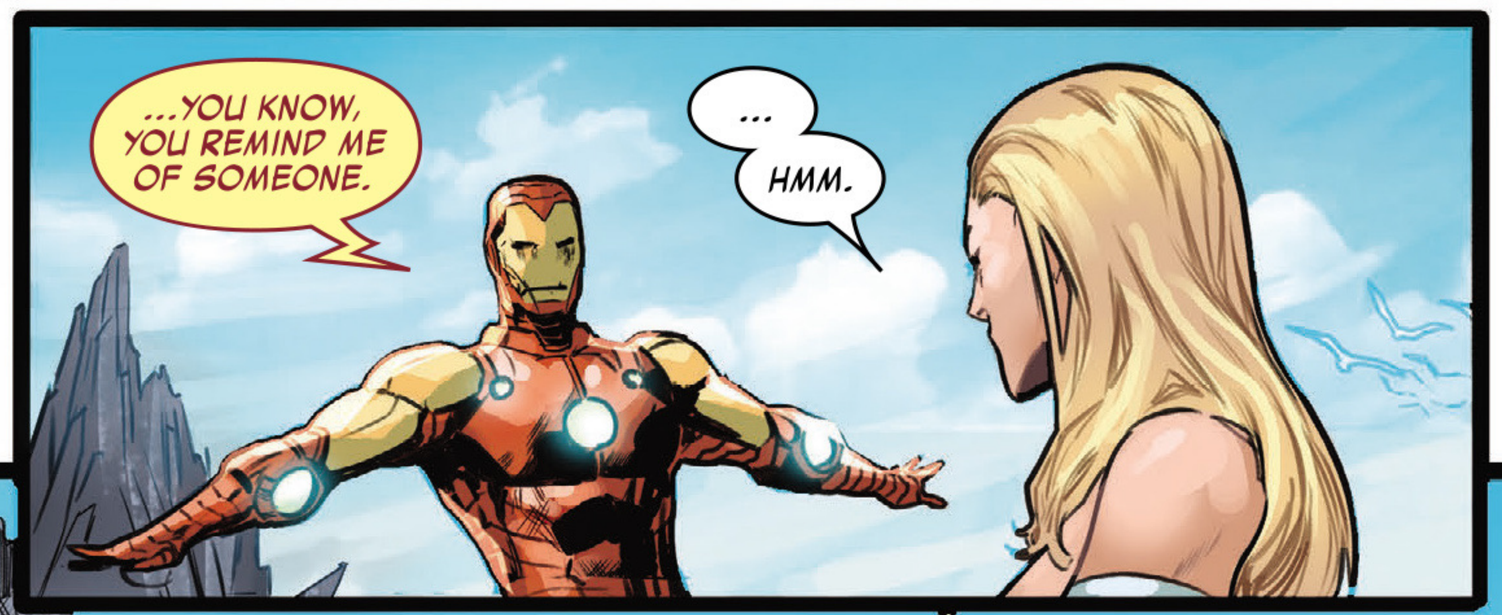
HE BUILT.
HE DID. HE HARVESTED COSMIC RAYS...
"...THROUGH RUBY QUARTZ LENSES. IT'S GIVEN HIM AN ABILITY NOT UNLIKE CYCLOPS'.
"HE HAS HELD A GRIP ON PHOBOS, AND OUR MUTANT COUSINS ON MARS ARE AMUSED BY THE SITUATION... FOR NOW."
THANK YOU, SUNFIRE.
GOOD LUCK ON YOUR MISSION.
IF I'M FORTUNATE, THEN I WILL SEE YOU BOTH AGAIN.
B.O.S.S., PULL THE CAR AROUND.
THANKS FOR THE DOWNLOAD, EMMA.
I OWE YOU FAIR WARNING--

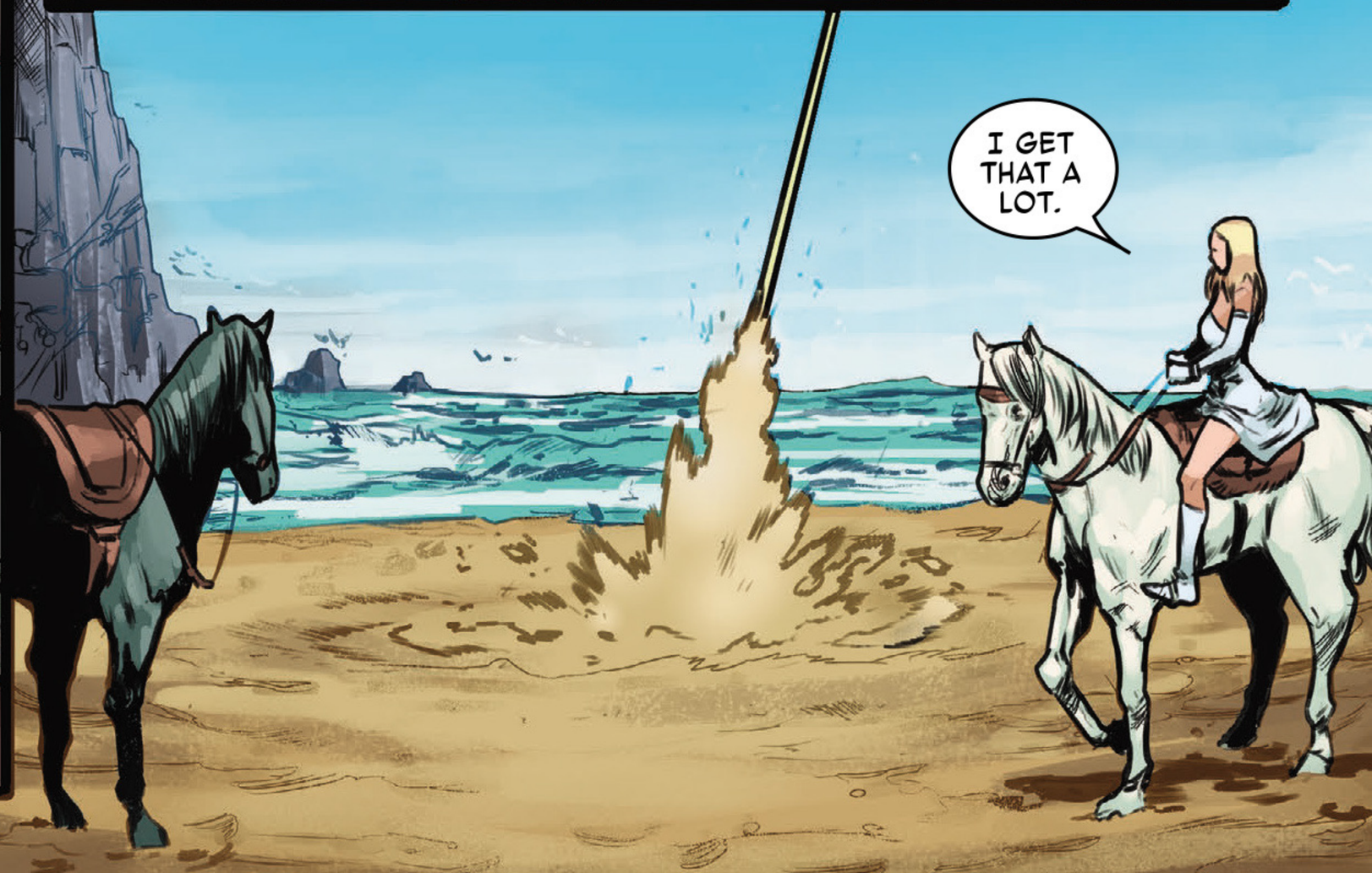
--I'VE FOUGHT THEM ALL.
THE ONES WITH MONEY. ONES WITH BRAINS. ONES WITH AGENDAS OR GRUDGES. I GOTTA TELL YOU, I THINK HE'S A LEGIT TRIPLE THREAT.
THIS GUY'S PLAYING CHESS.


I ENJOY THE GAME.
THE SAUCY OUTFITS WERE ALWAYS MEANT TO DISTRACT FROM THE GAMBITS I PLAYED AS THE WHITE QUEEN.


FEILONG REPRESENTS A DIPLOMATIC BLACK EYE FOR KRAKOA. LITTLE ELSE.
HAVE YOU CONSIDERED HE'S TRYING TO TURN YOU AGAINST US? THAT HE'S ALREADY COMPROMISED YOUR INTERESTS?


ALREADY CONSIDERED ALL MY BLIND SPOTS, THANKS...

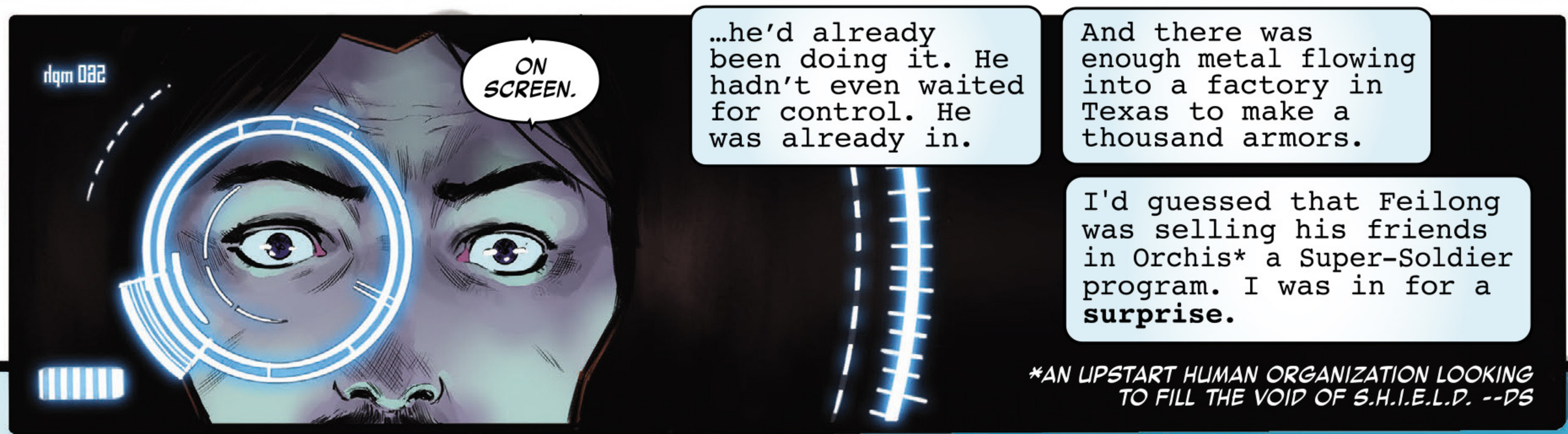

...YOU KNOW, YOU REMIND ME OF SOMEONE.
...
HMM.

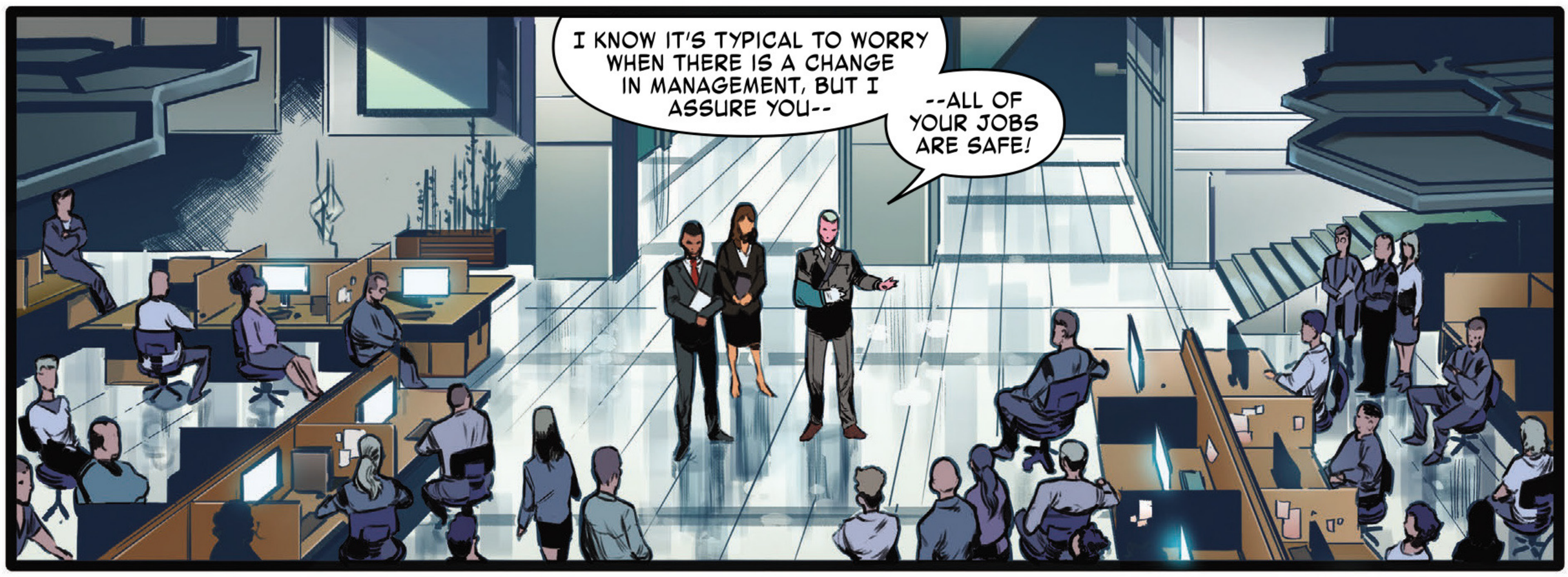

I GET THAT A LOT.

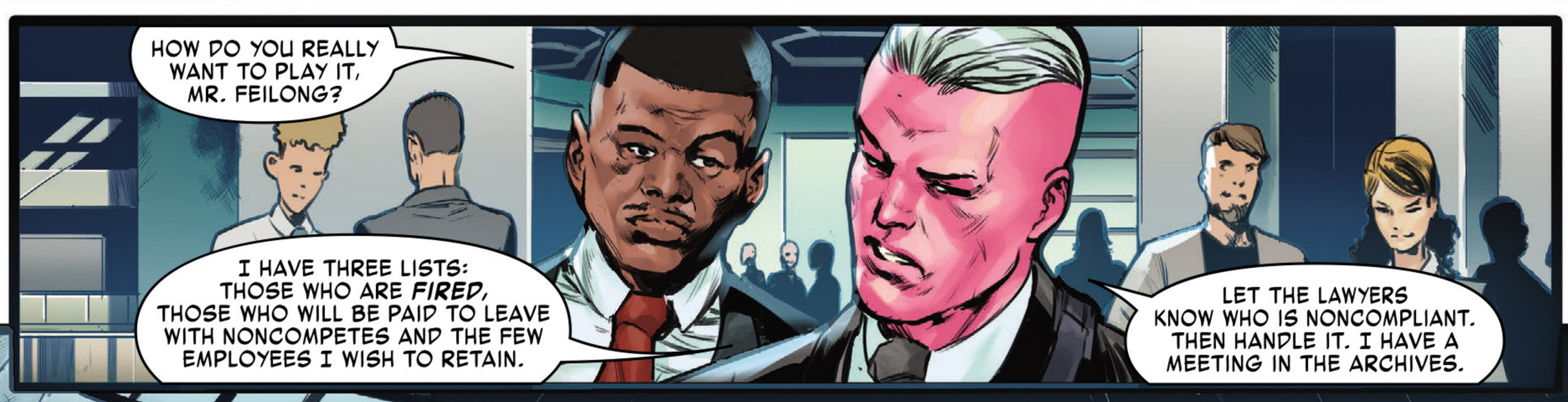
B.O.S.S., SHOW ME TRANSPORTATION LOGS FROM STARK UNLIMITED IN THE LAST FINANCIAL QUARTER.

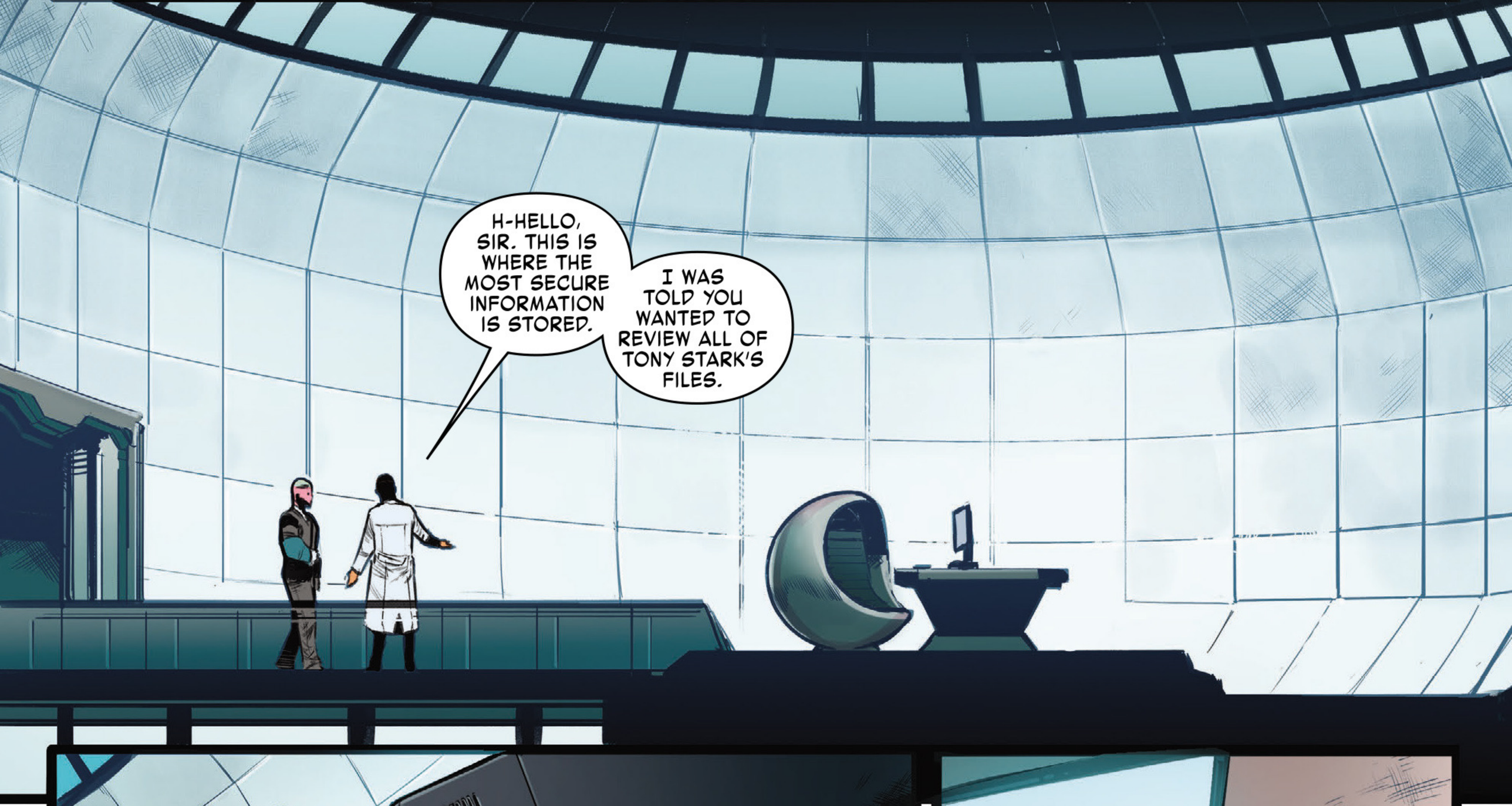
PROCESSING.

I'd assumed that Feilong was commencing on making Stark Unlimited a nightmare factory, but I was wrong…

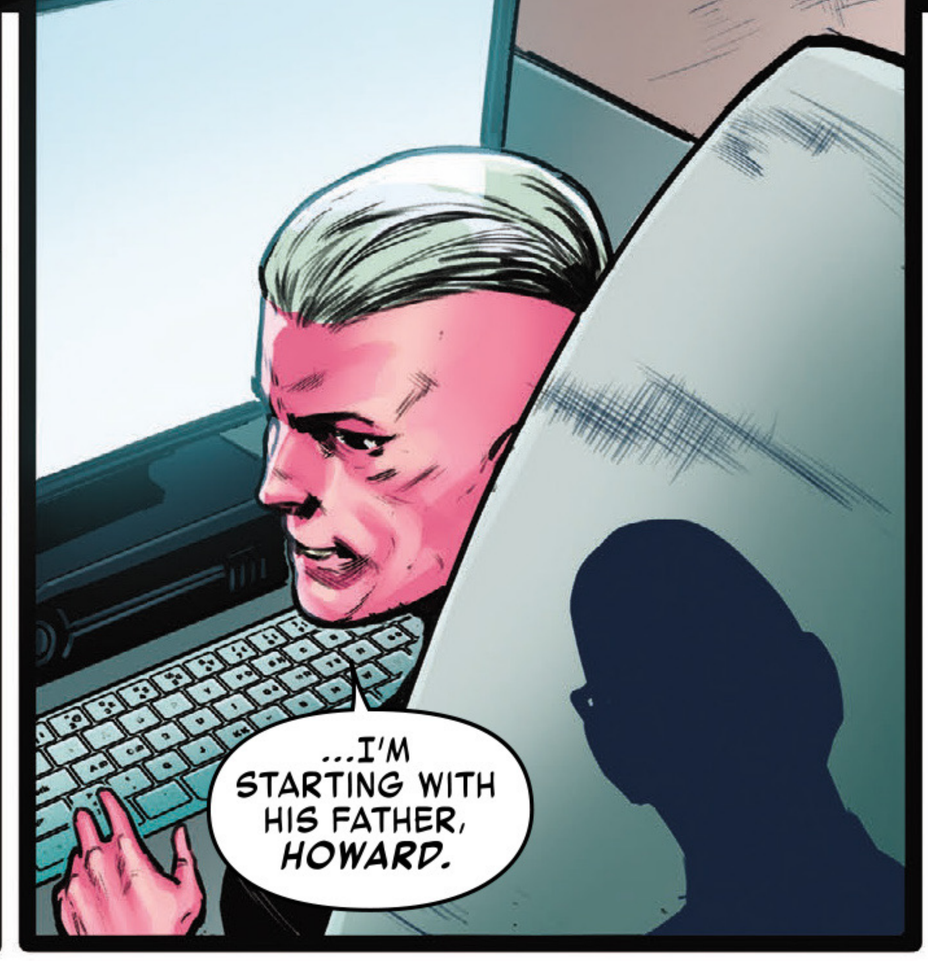


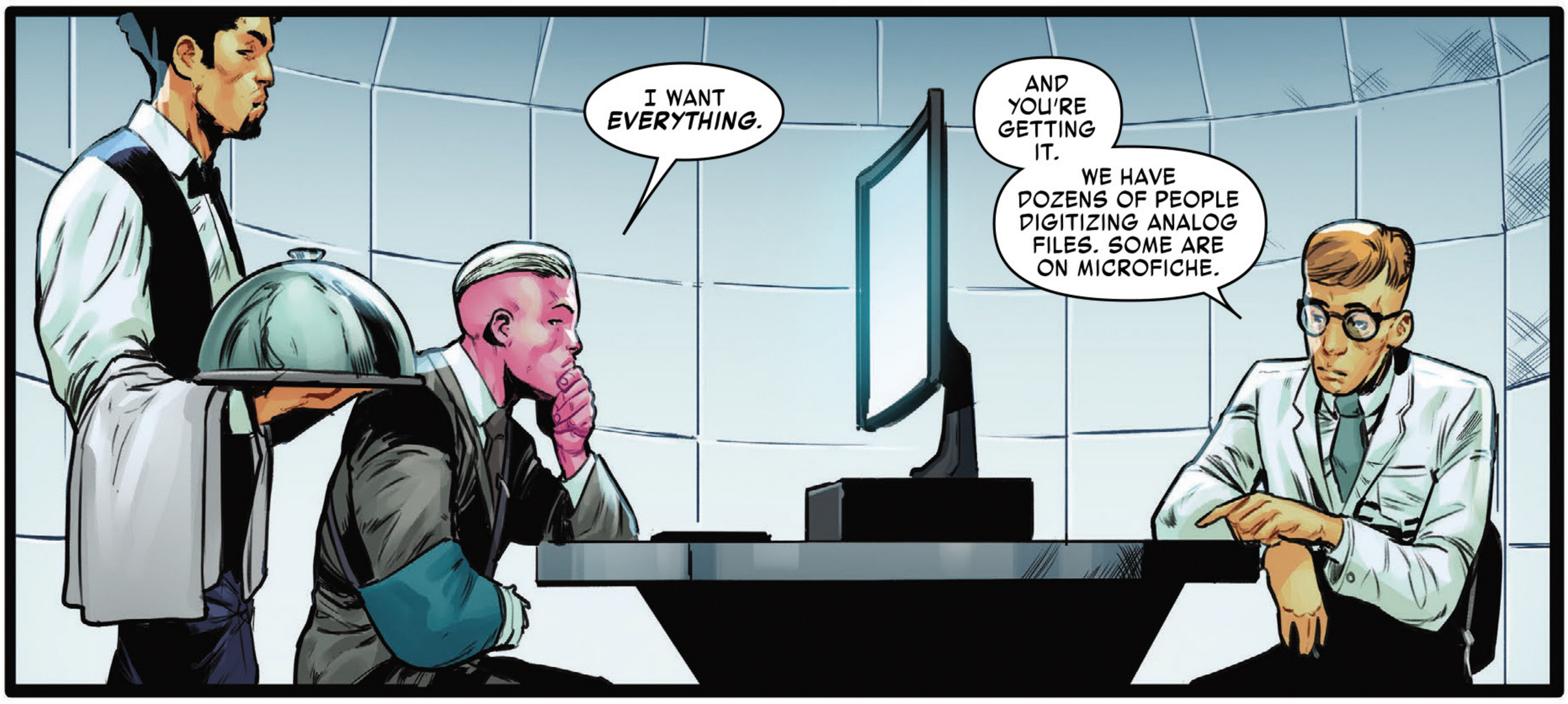

I KNOW IT'S TYPICAL TO WORRY WHEN THERE IS A CHANGE IN MANAGEMENT, BUT I ASSURE YOU--
--ALL OF YOUR JOBS ARE SAFE!

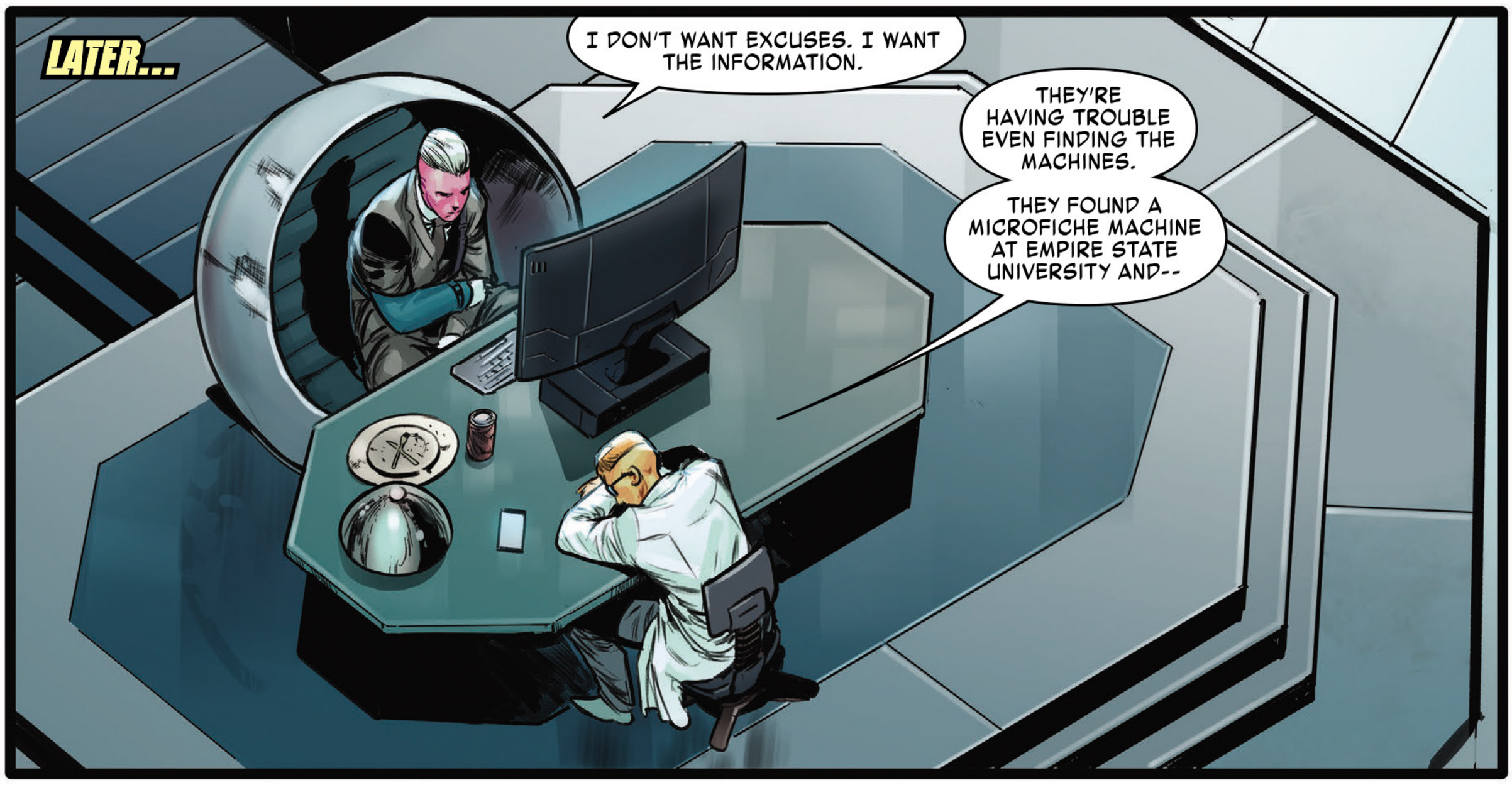

HOW DO YOU REALLY WANT TO PLAY IT, MR. FEILONG?
I HAVE THREE LISTS: THOSE WHO ARE *FIRED*, THOSE WHO WILL BE PAID TO LEAVE WITH NONCOMPETES AND THE FEW EMPLOYEES I WISH TO RETAIN.
LET THE LAWYERS KNOW WHO IS NONCOMPLIANT. THEN HANDLE IT. I HAVE A MEETING IN THE ARCHIVES.

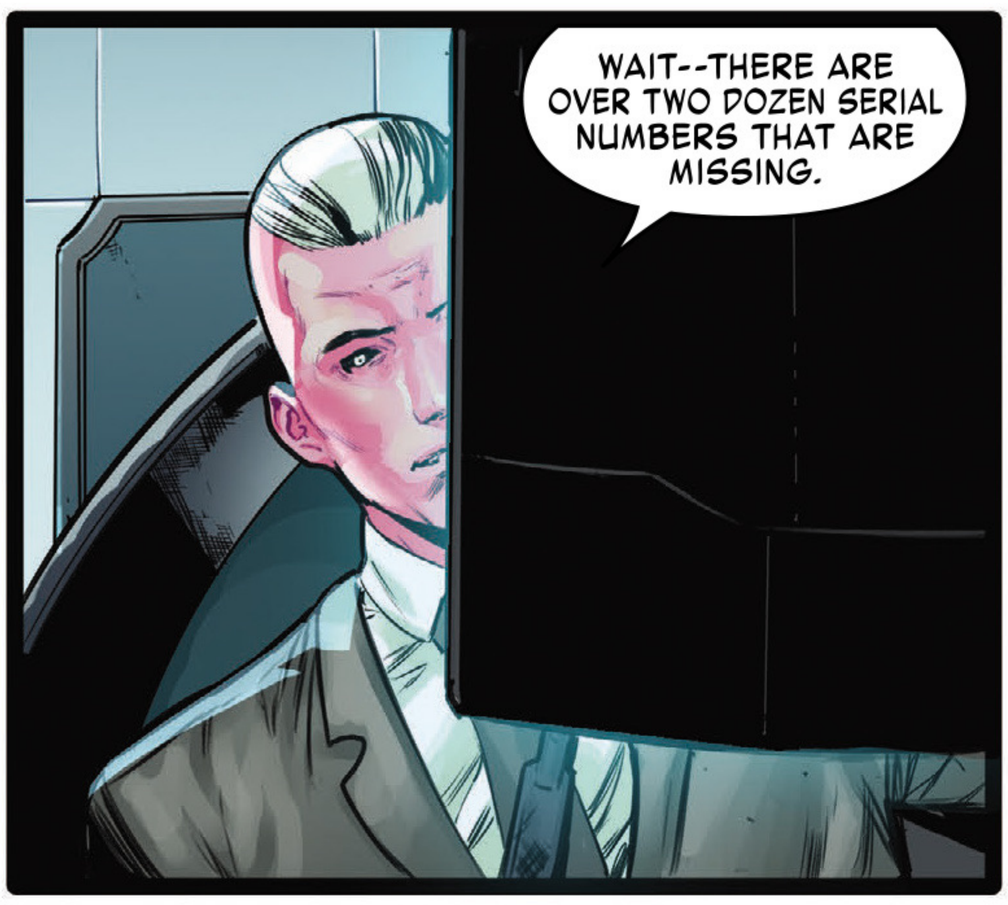

H-HELLO, SIR. THIS IS WHERE THE MOST SECURE INFORMATION IS STORED.
I WAS TOLD YOU WANTED TO REVIEW ALL OF TONY STARK'S FILES.

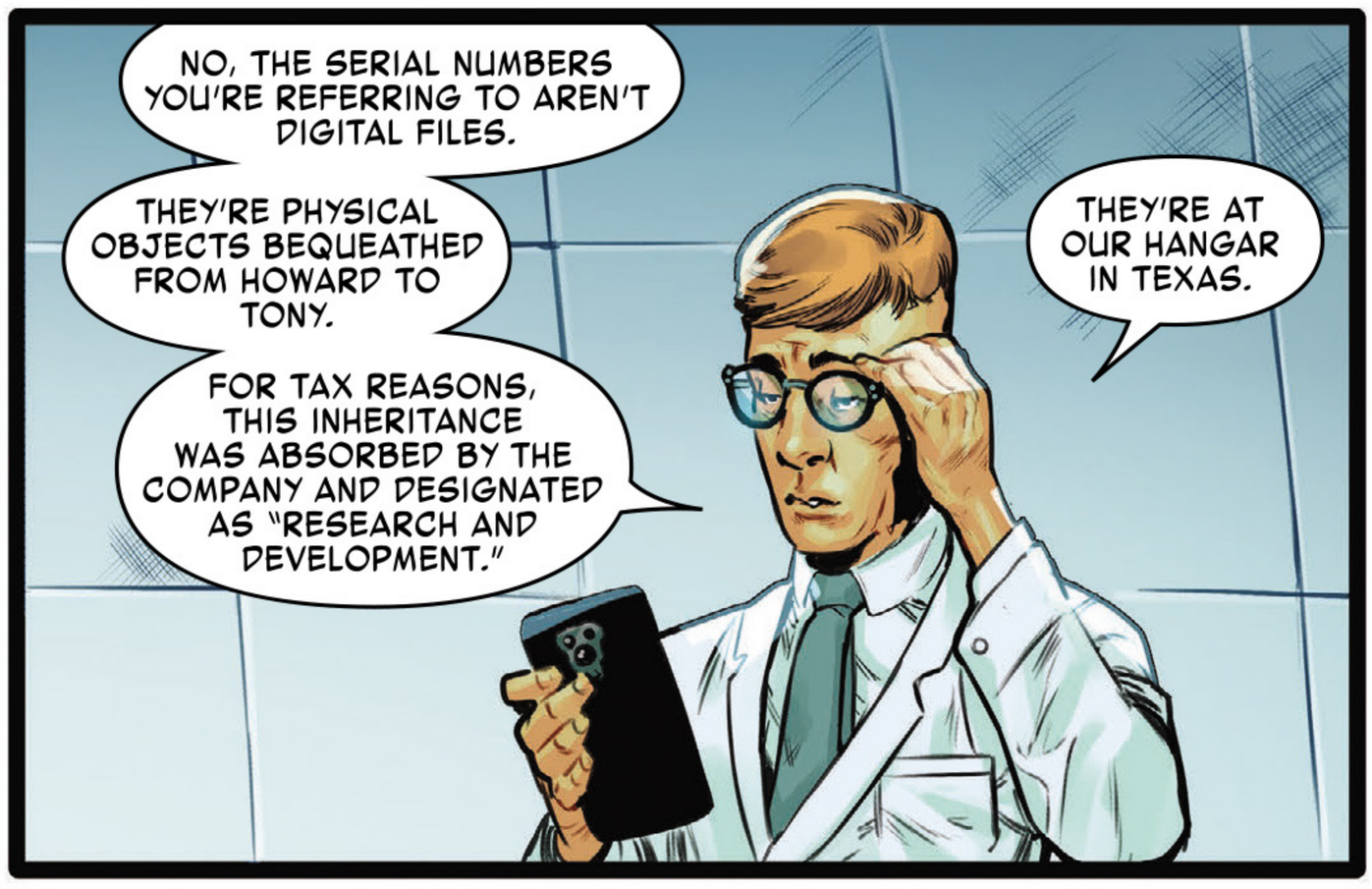
NO. WRONG STARK...


...I'M STARTING WITH HIS FATHER, *HOWARD.*

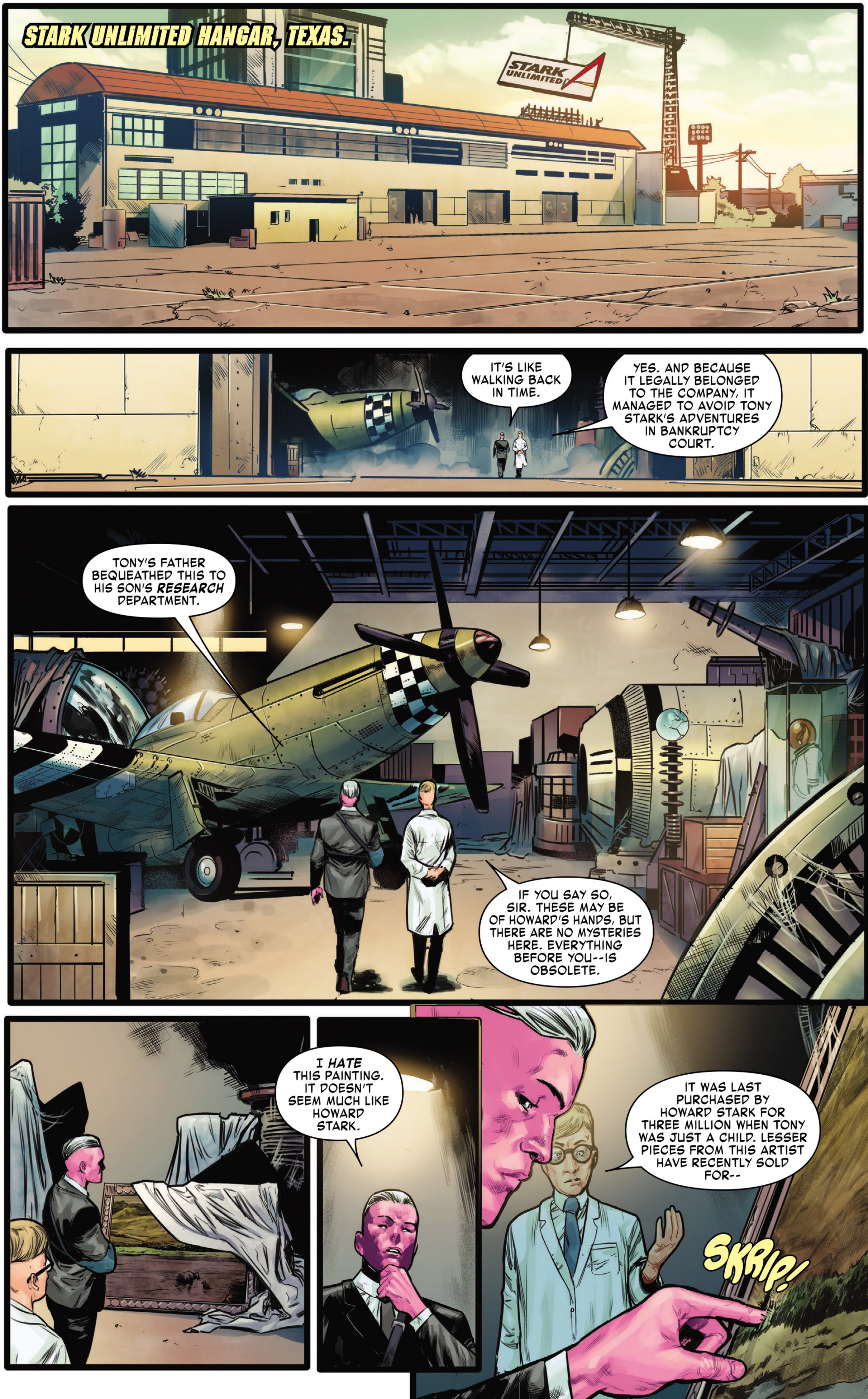

I WANT EVERYTHING.
AND YOU'RE GETTING IT.
WE HAVE DOZENS OF PEOPLE DIGITIZING ANALOG FILES. SOME ARE ON MICROFICHE.


LATER...
I DON'T WANT EXCUSES. I WANT THE INFORMATION.
THEY'RE HAVING TROUBLE EVEN FINDING THE MACHINES.
THEY FOUND A MICROFICHE MACHINE AT EMPIRE STATE UNIVERSITY AND--

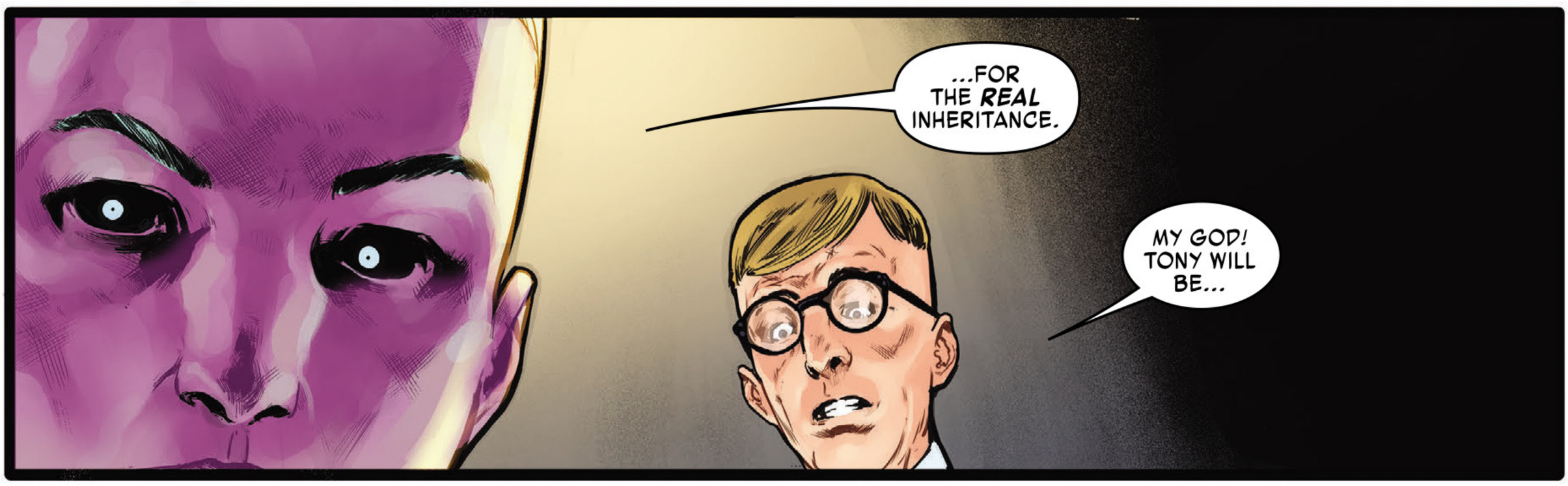

WAIT--THERE ARE OVER TWO DOZEN SERIAL NUMBERS THAT ARE MISSING.


NO, THE SERIAL NUMBERS YOU'RE REFERRING TO AREN'T DIGITAL FILES.
THEY'RE PHYSICAL OBJECTS BEQUEATHED FROM HOWARD TO TONY.
FOR TAX REASONS, THIS INHERITANCE WAS ABSORBED BY THE COMPANY AND DESIGNATED AS "RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT."
THEY'RE AT OUR HANGAR IN TEXAS.

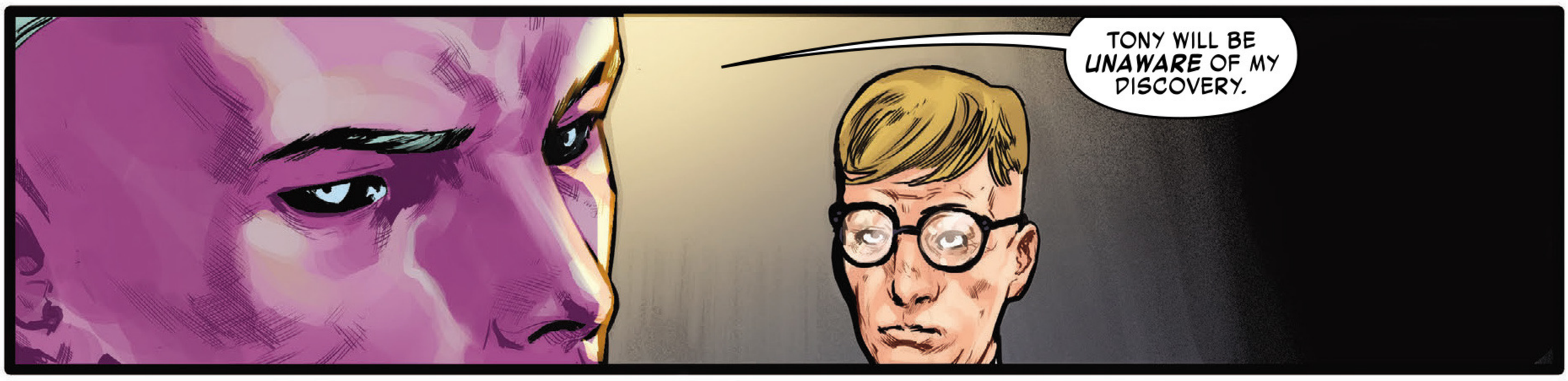
YES, ANOTHER INHERITANCE ABANDONED BY MY PREDECESSOR.
WHAT IS IT THEY SAY IN TEXAS? YEEHAW?


STARK UNLIMITED HANGAR, TEXAS.
STARK UNLIMITED
IT'S LIKE WALKING BACK IN TIME.
YES. AND BECAUSE IT LEGALLY BELONGED TO THE COMPANY, IT MANAGED TO AVOID TONY STARK'S ADVENTURES IN BANKRUPTCY COURT.
TONY'S FATHER BEQUEATHED THIS TO HIS SON'S *RESEARCH* DEPARTMENT.
IF YOU SAY SO, SIR. THESE MAY BE OF HOWARD'S HANDS, BUT THERE ARE NO MYSTERIES HERE. EVERYTHING BEFORE YOU--IS OBSOLETE.
I *HATE* THIS PAINTING. IT DOESN'T SEEM MUCH LIKE HOWARD STARK.
IT WAS LAST PURCHASED BY HOWARD STARK FOR THREE MILLION WHEN TONY WAS JUST A CHILD. LESSER PIECES FROM THIS ARTIST HAVE RECENTLY SOLD FOR--
SKRIP!

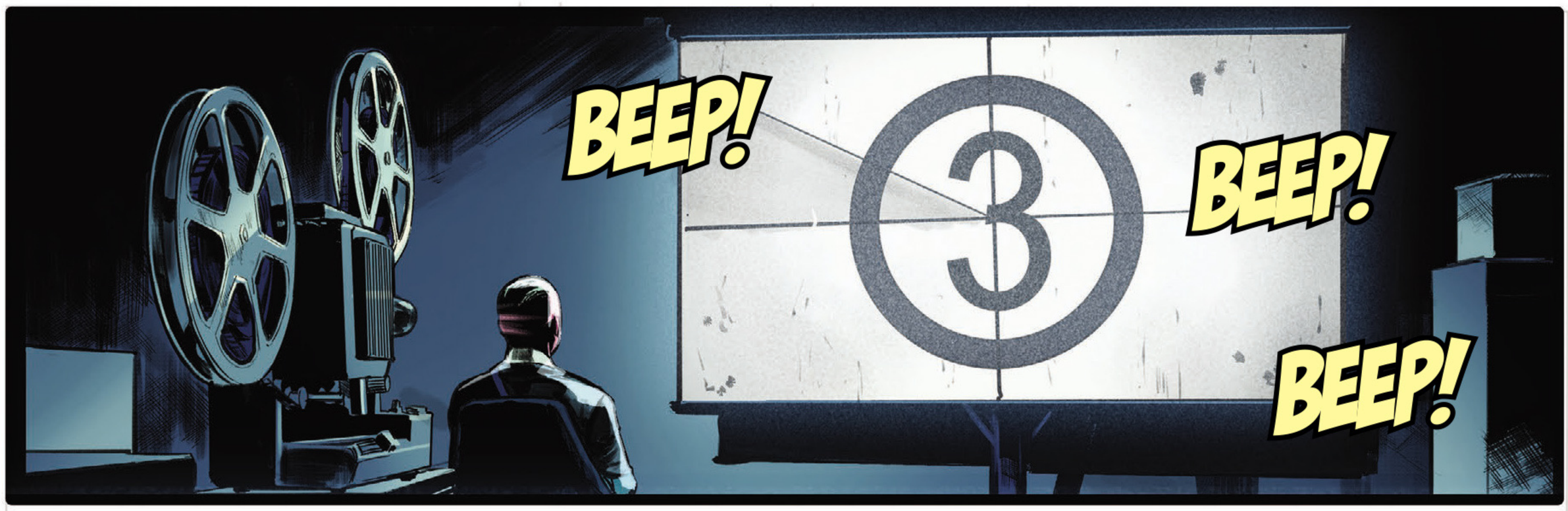
THE QUESTIONABLE PAINTING IS NOTHING MORE THAN AN ENVELOPE...

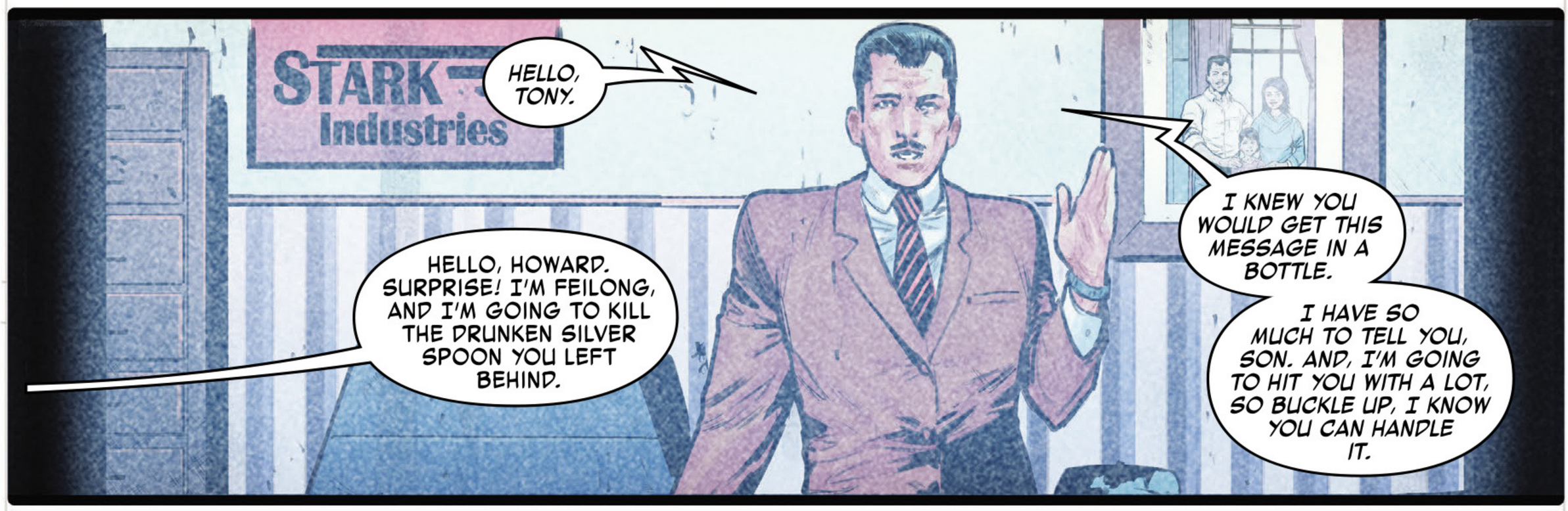

...FOR THE *REAL* INHERITANCE.
MY GOD! TONY WILL BE...

Howard
To Tony, From Howard
A-4
To Tony, From Howard
B-2

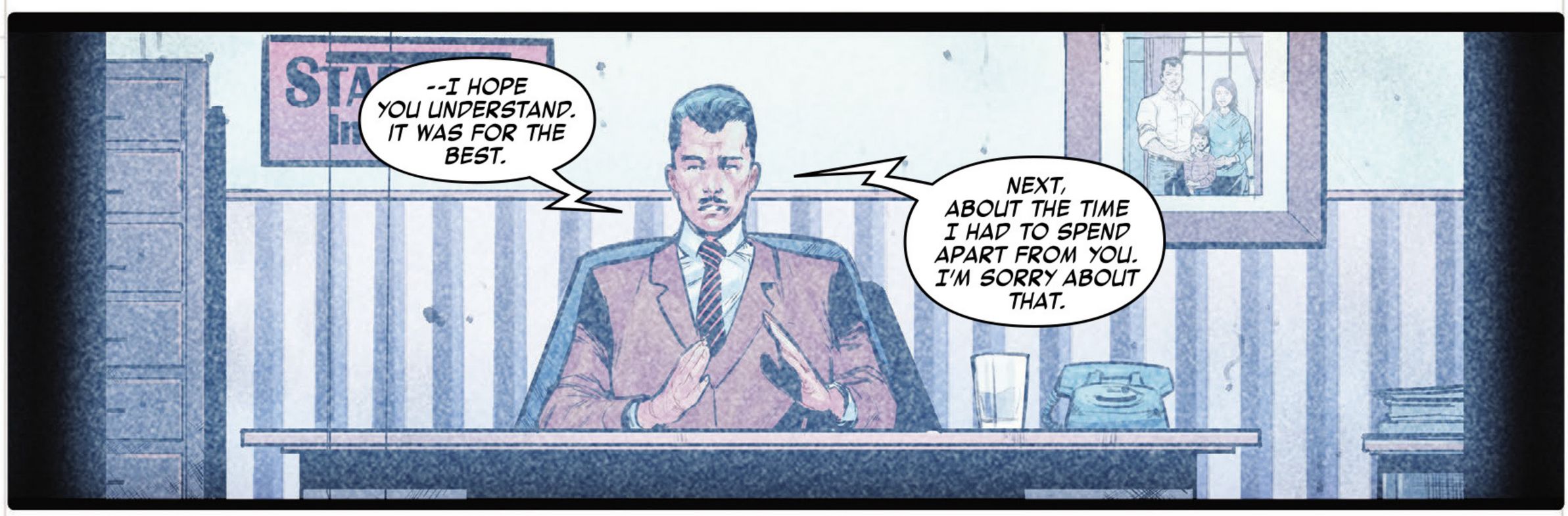

TONY WILL BE *UNAWARE* OF MY DISCOVERY.

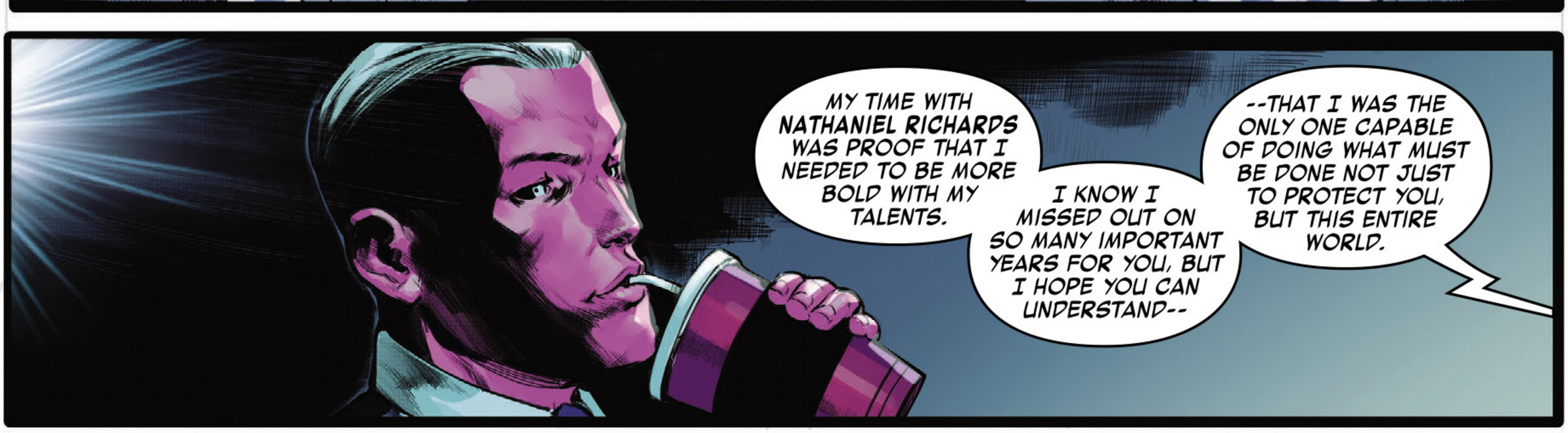
YOU SAID IT YOURSELF--THIS IS ALL STARK UNLIMITED PROPERTY, AND *I* AM ITS MASTER.


BEEP!
3
BEEP!
BEEP!


STARK Industries
HELLO, TONY.
HELLO, HOWARD. SURPRISE! I'M FEILONG, AND I'M GOING TO KILL THE DRUNKEN SILVER SPOON YOU LEFT BEHIND.
I KNEW YOU WOULD GET THIS MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE.
I HAVE SO MUCH TO TELL YOU, SON. AND, I'M GOING TO HIT YOU WITH A LOT, SO BUCKLE UP, I KNOW YOU CAN HANDLE IT.

STARK Industries
FIRST, ABOUT THE ADOPTION--
BZZSST


--I HOPE YOU UNDERSTAND. IT WAS FOR THE BEST.
NEXT, ABOUT THE TIME I HAD TO SPEND APART FROM YOU. I'M SORRY ABOUT THAT.


MY TIME WITH NATHANIEL RICHARDS WAS PROOF THAT I NEEDED TO BE MORE BOLD WITH MY TALENTS.
I KNOW I MISSED OUT ON SO MANY IMPORTANT YEARS FOR YOU, BUT I HOPE YOU CAN UNDERSTAND--
--THAT I WAS THE ONLY ONE CAPABLE OF DOING WHAT MUST BE DONE NOT JUST TO PROTECT YOU, BUT THIS ENTIRE WORLD.

STARK Industries
I'M MAKING THIS FILM AND HIDING IT IN A PLACE I KNOW YOU'LL FIND--JUST IN CASE I DON'T MAKE IT BACK TO YOU.
I HAVE MANY ENEMIES AND NEED TO WORK WITHOUT EYES ON ME.

I'VE BEEN TRADING IDEAS WITH A MAN NAMED ADAM BRASHEAR. IN CASE THE POWERS THAT BE TRY TO ERASE HIM, I'VE INSTRUCTED THAT ALL OF HIS PAPERS BE ARCHIVED AT THE COMPANY.
YOU SHOULD READ HIS WORK.
I'VE MADE SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT LEAPS OF MY CAREER.
I DON'T HAVE THE DISCOVERY IN MY HAND YET BECAUSE MY PRIZE LIES BEYOND.

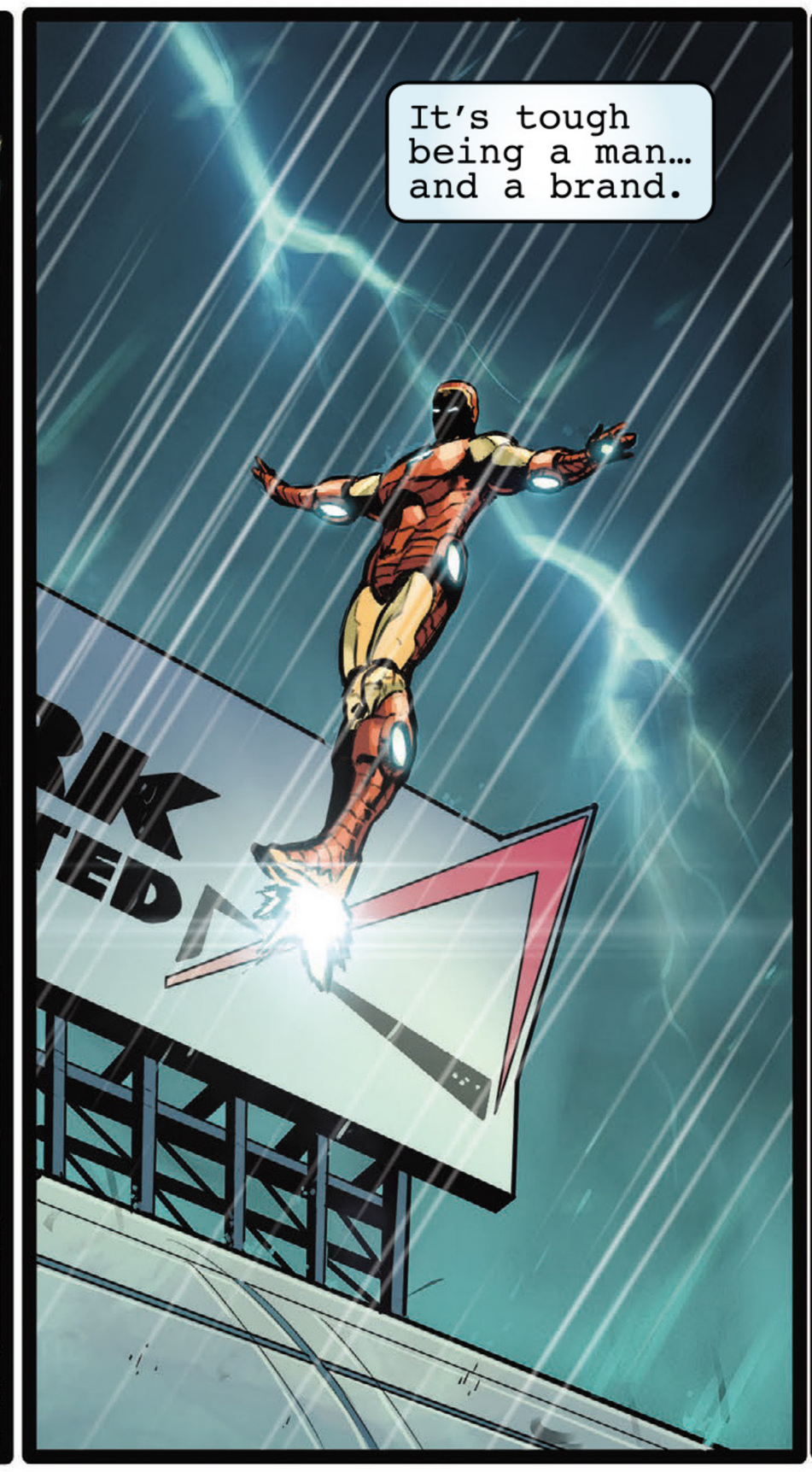
IT'S A METAL OUTSIDE OUR PERIODIC TABLE THAT SHOULDN'T EXIST, BECAUSE IT'S OUTSIDE OF OUR UNIVERSE.
IF I'M SUCCESSFUL, THIS METAL COULD BE MORE SIGNIFICANT TO HUMANITY THAN IRON WAS TO OUR ANCESTORS.
I'M CALLING IT THE "MIRACLE METAL" FOR NOW...BUT DON'T WORRY, I'LL COME UP WITH SOMETHING MORE BASED IN SCIENCE ONCE I HAVE IT IN MY HANDS.

I'M LEAVING YOU MY NOTES ON IT IN THE FILM CANISTERS.
PERHAPS... IF I'M UNSUCCESSFUL, YOU CAN FINISH WHAT I AM ABOUT TO BEGIN.

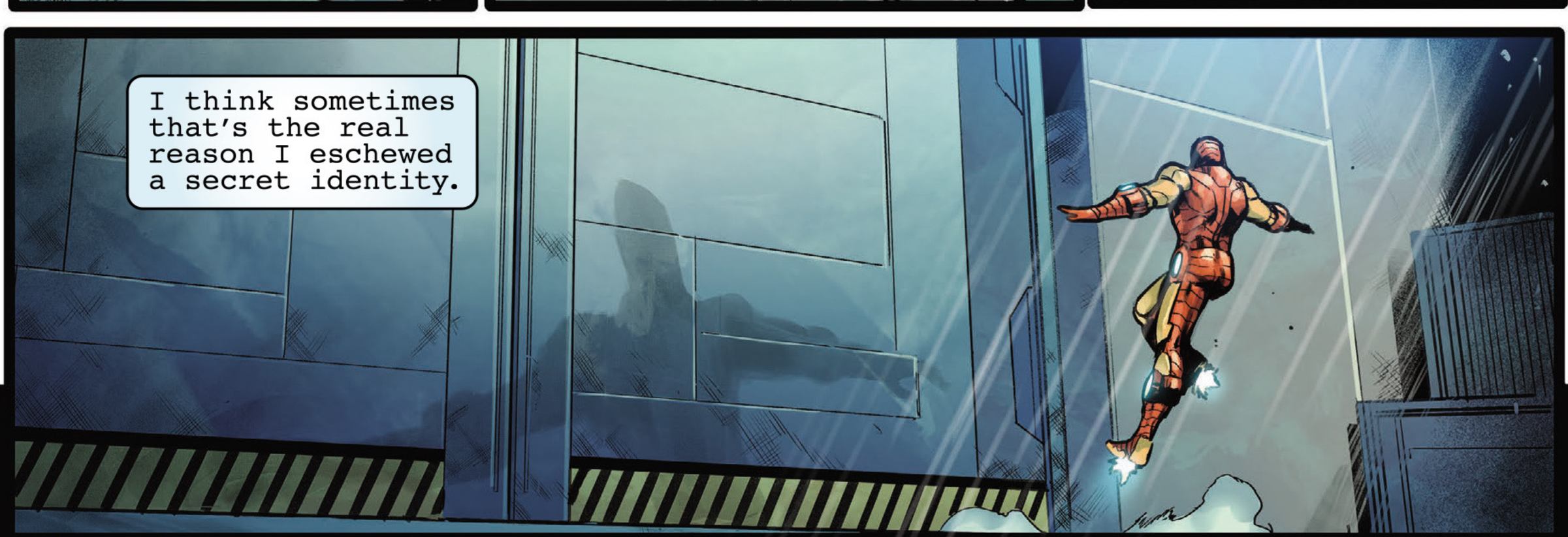
THIS IS YOUR REAL INHERITANCE, SON.

GOODBYE, TONY. I HOPE...I SEE YOU AGAIN, AND YOU GROW UP TO BE THE KIND OF MAN WHO WILL UNDERSTAND--
--WHY I HAD TO DO WHAT I NEED TO DO. FOR ALL HUMANKIND.

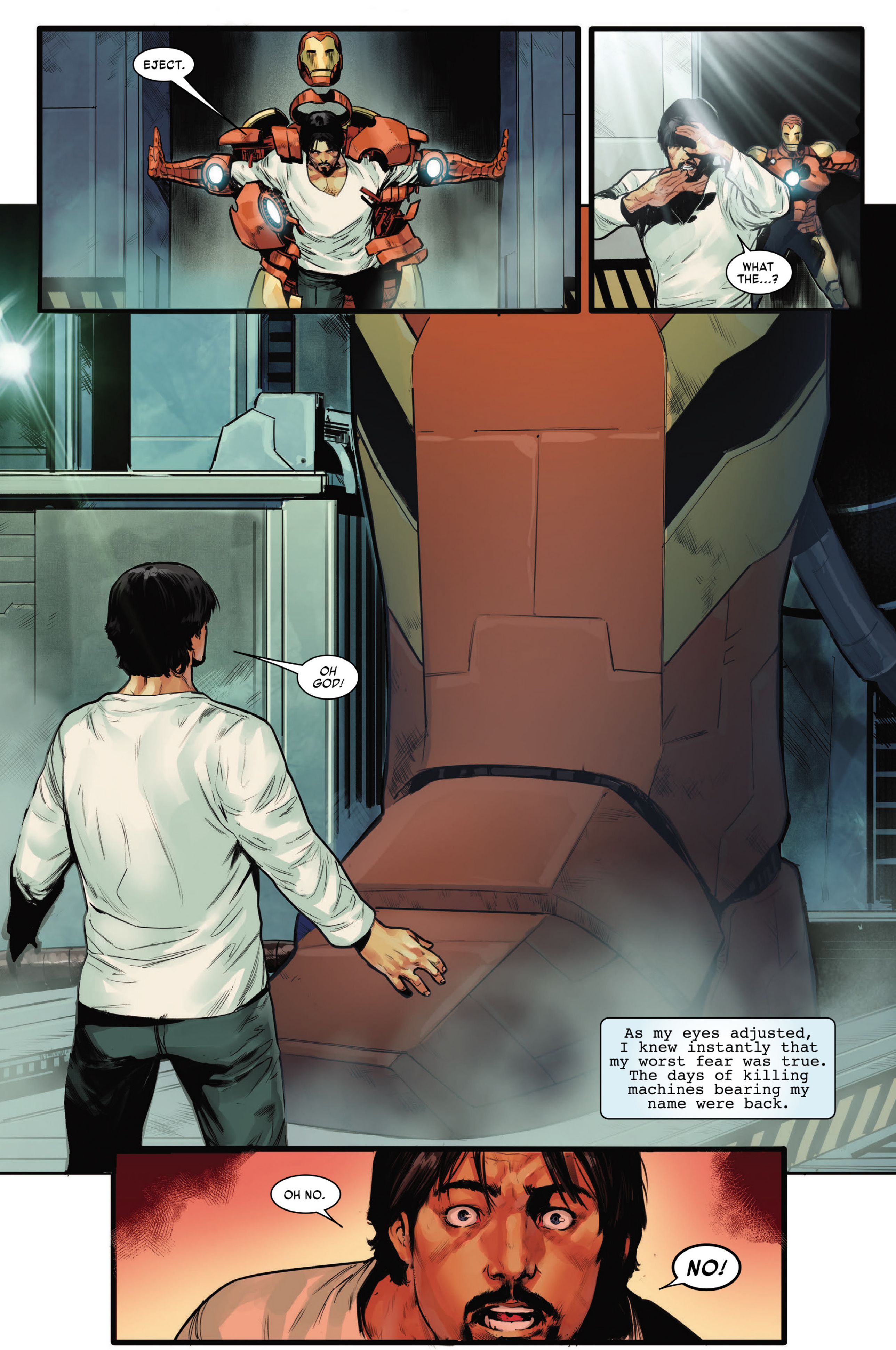
LATE THAT NIGHT AT THE SAME TEXAS FACILITY.
STARK UNLIMITED


It's tough being a man… and a brand.

I was not always proud of everything that carried the Stark name.

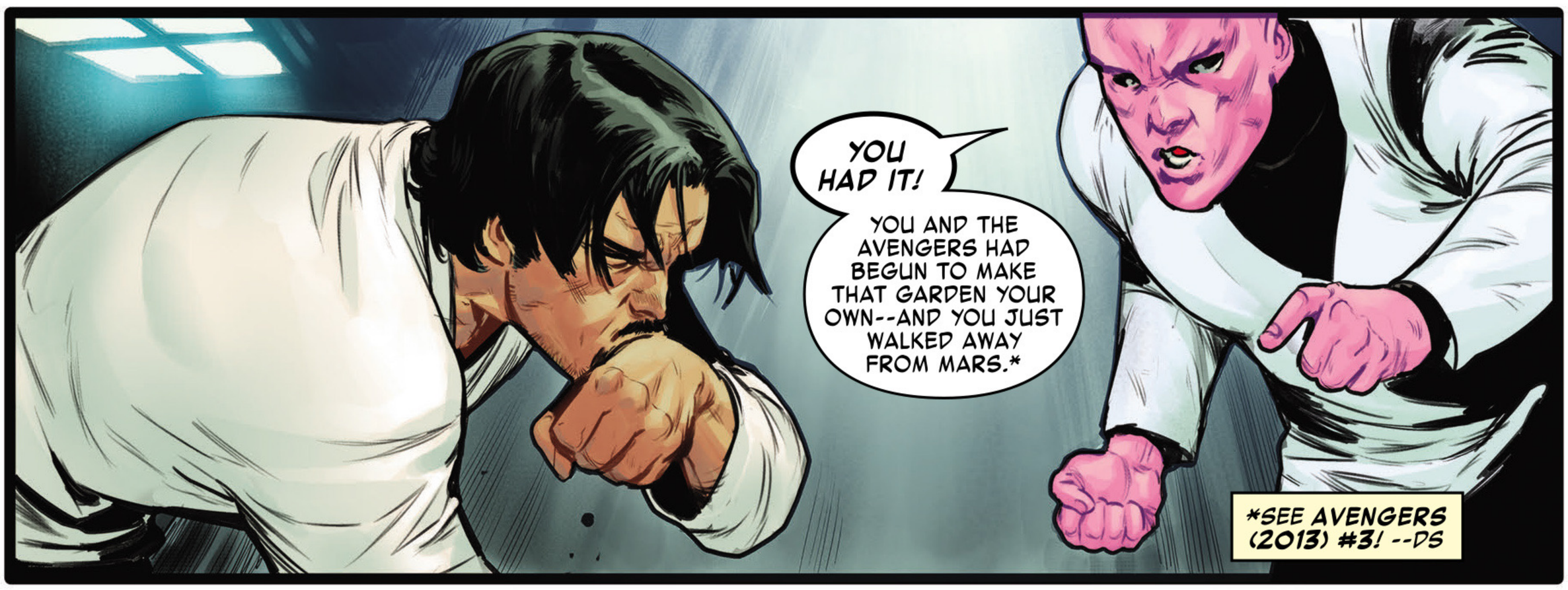

I think sometimes that's the real reason I eschewed a secret identity.

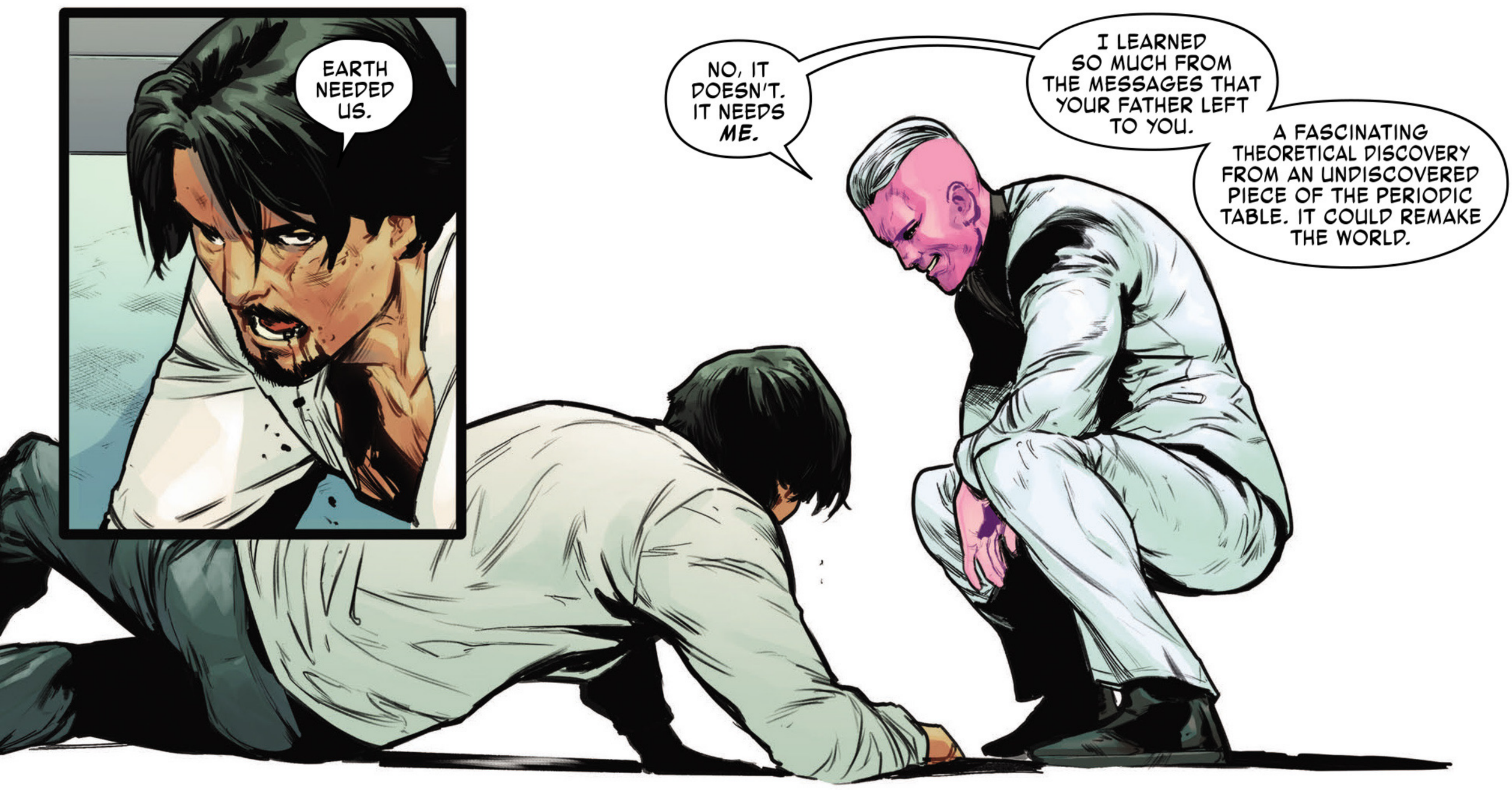
I wanted people to know it was me in this suit. Laying my life on the line for them.
Trying to atone for my past "success."


EJECT.
WHAT THE...?
OH GOD!
As my eyes adjusted, I knew instantly that my worst fear was true. The days of killing machines bearing my name were back.
OH NO.
NO!

The dawn of the **Stark Sentinels** was at hand.

BZZZT!
AARGH!
WHAT TIMING AND LUCK YOU HAVE, MR. STARK.
THAT SHOCK WAS FROM A "CROWD CONTROL" DRONE WE'RE GOING TO BE SELLING TO POLICE DEPARTMENTS. WHAT DO YOU THINK?
I THINK... YOU STILL DON'T KNOW WHO YOU'RE MESSING WITH.
HA.
IRONIC, SINCE I JUST COMPLETED A DEEP DIVE INTO YOU AND YOUR FATHER. I DISCOVERED YOUR *TRUE* INHERITANCE.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
YOU DON'T HAVE MY PERMISSION TO CRAWL AWAY YET.
FIRST, ONE THING YOU MISUNDERSTAND ABOUT ME--I DIDN'T GO TO MARS TO SEE A MUTANT ACCOMPLISHMENT--
AAARGH!
WHUDD!
--I WENT TO SEE A *HUMAN FAILURE!*


YOU HAD IT!
YOU AND THE AVENGERS HAD BEGUN TO MAKE THAT GARDEN YOUR OWN--AND YOU JUST WALKED AWAY FROM MARS.*
*SEE AVENGERS (2013) #3! --DS


EARTH NEEDED US.
NO, IT DOESN'T. IT NEEDS ME.
I LEARNED SO MUCH FROM THE MESSAGES THAT YOUR FATHER LEFT TO YOU.
A FASCINATING THEORETICAL DISCOVERY FROM AN UNDISCOVERED PIECE OF THE PERIODIC TABLE. IT COULD REMAKE THE WORLD.

WHAT DID YOU FIND FROM HOWARD?
HE LEFT CLUES TO SOMETHING WONDERFUL.
YOU'LL LEARN OF MY DISCOVERY WHEN THE REST OF THE WORLD DOES. REMEMBER, YOU'RE DIVESTED OF EVERYTHING.
HAVEN'T YOU WONDERED WHY I HAVEN'T SIMPLY KILLED YOU YET?
I WANT YOU TO BE HERE--TO WITNESS ME BE THE MAN YOU SHOULD HAVE BECOME. THEN YOU MAY DIE. OR CRAWL BACK INTO A BOTTLE OF YOUR CHOOSING.
I DON'T BELIEVE YOU WILL DESTROY ANYTHING IMPORTANT FROM MY FATHER.
KEEP UP, TONY. I WALKED INTO THE ROOM WITH YOUR FATHER'S MESSAGES IN A BURNING TRASH CAN.
I IMAGINE THIS IS A TOUGH WAY FOR YOU TO FIND OUT I HAVE A PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY.

NO. YOU'RE BLUFFING.
THRK!
I'M NOT. AND IF YOUR FATHER WAS CORRECT, I'M GOING TO CHANGE THE WORLD-- AGAIN.
START RUNNING, STARK. COME THE DAWN, IF YOU'RE STILL IN MY SUIT...YOUR LIFE AND THOSE OF YOUR FRIENDS WILL BECOME VERY UNPLEASANT.
SENTINELS-- TIME FOR TARGET PRACTICE-- DEAL WITH THIS THREAT.

PFF
FFT!
OBEYING.
Everything Iron Man ever was--had been perverted into this monster.
That was the night I found out…
BOOM
…what it's like to face superior technology.
I felt small.

My first encounter with the Stark Sentinels went about as well as anyone could have expected.

ERROR

CRITICAL

WHAT STILL WORKS?

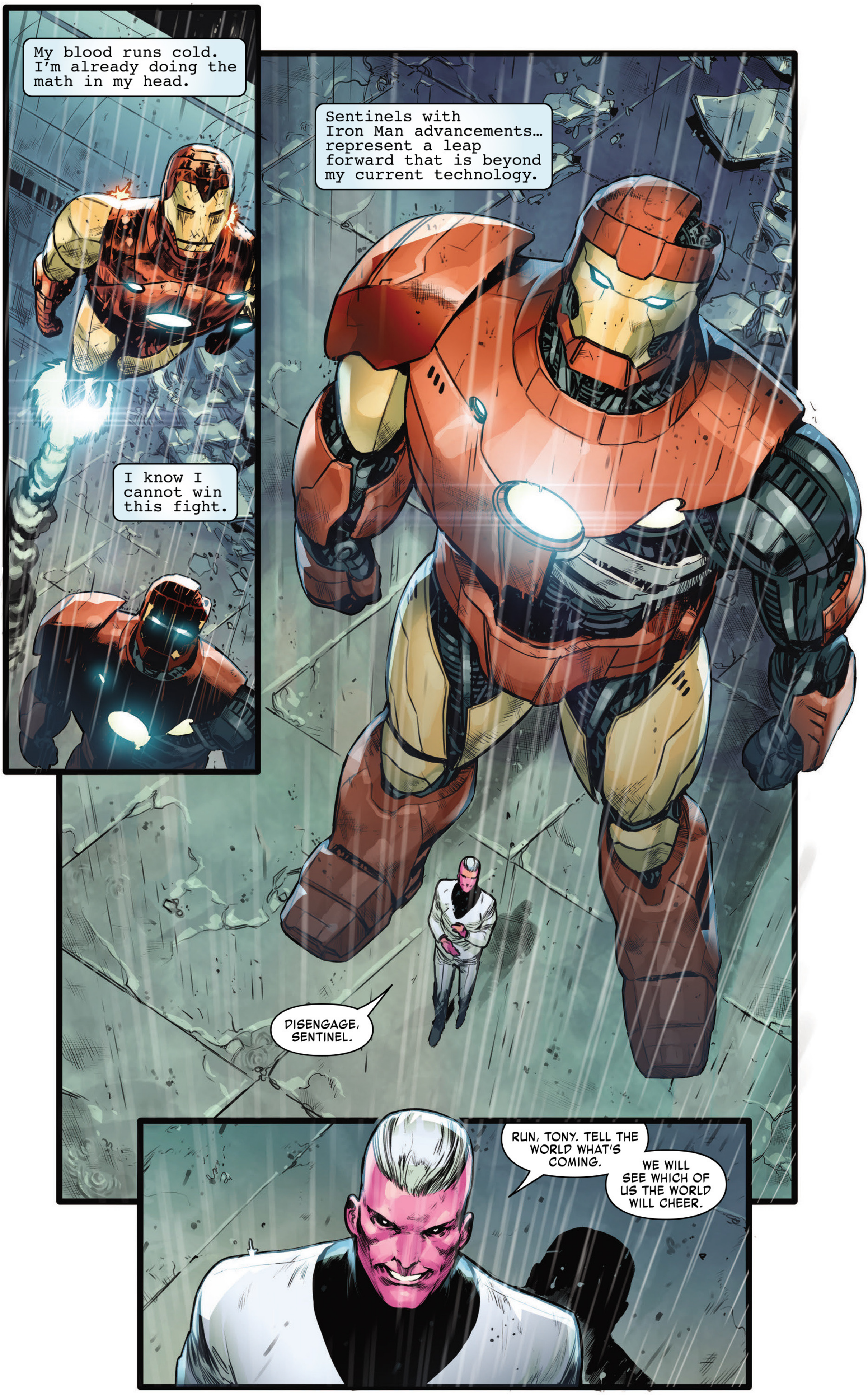
ERROR

An Iron Man armor at this scale isn't just bigger.

It's more powerful…

…its hide is thicker.

PUT ALL RESERVE POWER INTO THRUSTERS.


My blood runs cold. I'm already doing the math in my head.
Sentinels with Iron Man advancements… represent a leap forward that is beyond my current technology.
I know I cannot win this fight.
DISENGAGE, SENTINEL.
RUN, TONY. TELL THE WORLD WHAT'S COMING.
WE WILL SEE WHICH OF US THE WORLD WILL CHEER.

MARVEL
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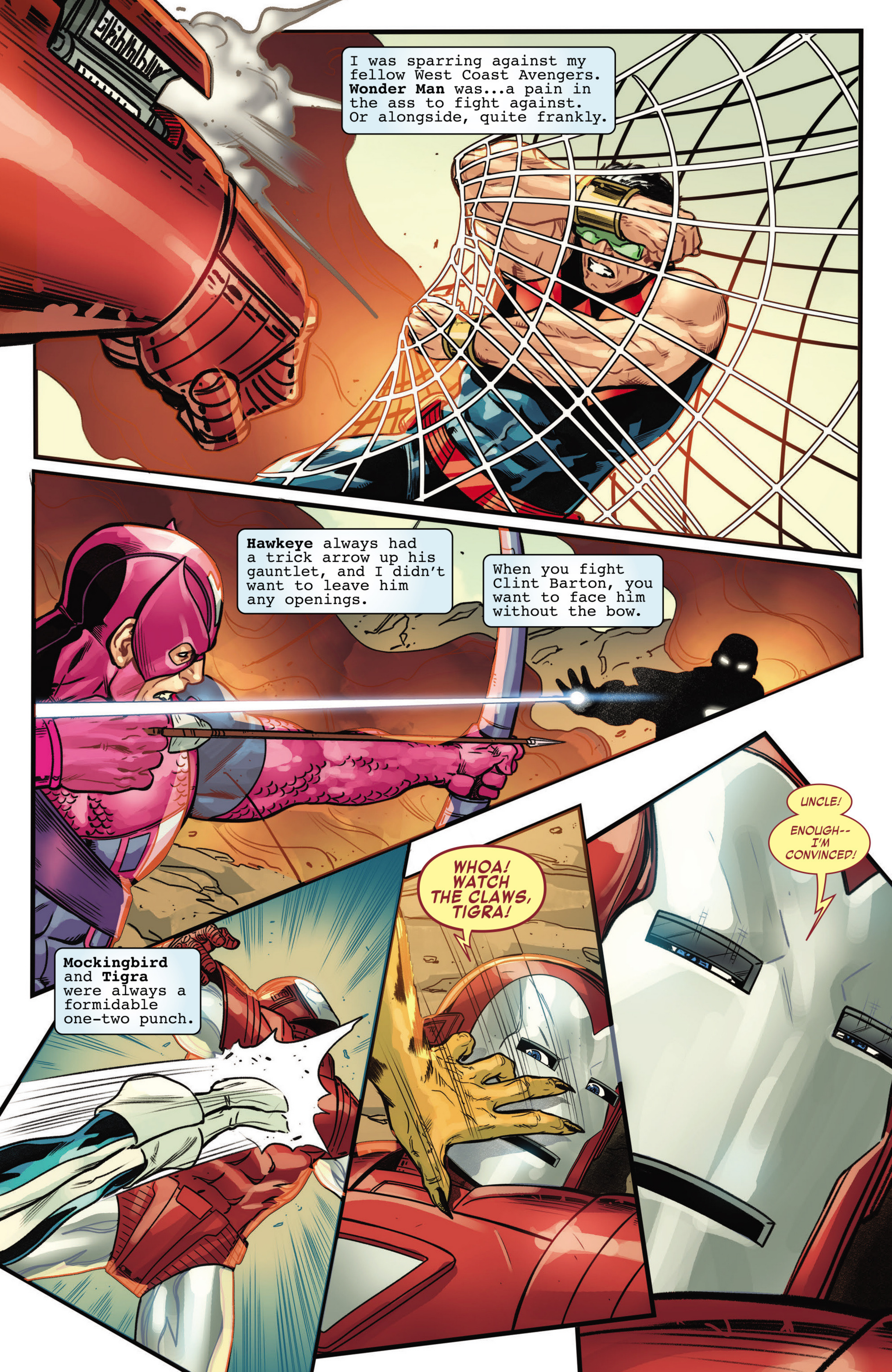
TM
$3.99US
6 MAY
656 LGY
RATED T+
APPROVED BY THE STARK CODE AUTHORITY
THE INVINCIBLE
IRON MAN
SIX

BRONSON'S CABS
I divested myself of my technology company, Stark Unlimited, and blew my money buying up as many black-market weapons (many of the mass-destruction variety) as I was able to.
I've been crashing in my current workshop, an old cabstand across the river in Jersey.
I have a bloodthirsty capitalist superhuman making Sentinels with my technology and slapping my name on them.
My life wasn't challenging enough, so I've become a writer.
And that means a thought might flutter through my mind in the dead of night...
...that I might want to capture before it's gone forever.
I tend to remember stories not by which year they happened in, but by which armor I was wearing at the time.

And this chapter of my life took place when I was wearing an armor called **"the Silver Centurion."**
Yes, the armor had shoulder pads, but there were tactical, aerodynamic reasons for them.
Plus, they were a staple of the fashion of the day.


I was sparring against my fellow West Coast Avengers. **Wonder Man** was...a pain in the ass to fight against. Or alongside, quite frankly.
Hawkeye always had a trick arrow up his gauntlet, and I didn't want to leave him any openings.
When you fight Clint Barton, you want to face him without the bow.
Mockingbird and **Tigra** were always a formidable one-two punch.
WHOA! WATCH THE CLAWS, TIGRA!
UNCLE!
ENOUGH-- I'M CONVINCED!

VERY WELL-- OL' SHELLHEAD HAS SURRENDERED.
SHUT DOWN THE MIND-CONTROL DEVICE!
WHAT HAPPENED?
WERE WE JUST KICKING YOUR ASS?
WHAT? NO. BESIDES, THAT'S CLASSIFIED, RIGHT, GENERAL DINGER?
MIND CONTROL! IT'S THE FUTURE--AND YOUR GOVERNMENT NEEDS YOUR HELP!
I WAS HAPPY TO DEMONSTRATE THIS DEVICE BY TURNING YOUR TEAM AGAINST YOU--MOMENTARILY.
WE'VE GOT SOME WAYWARD TECHNOLOGY THAT MAYBE ONLY YOU CAN HELP RECOVER!
I'LL TELL IT TO YOUR BOSS WHEN HE ARRIVES.

Back then, I felt it necessary to separate myself from Iron Man. I told the world he was an unnamed soldier serving as my bodyguard.

The lie made my life both easier and more complicated. Like flying off base only to return an hour later as myself.

And if I'm being honest with you, there have been times in my life when I wasn't sure if being myself meant I was Iron Man or--

TONY STARK!

HELLO AGAIN, GENERAL DINGER. MY BODYGUARD TOLD ME YOU NEEDED TO SEE ME, BUT...

...I SHOULD WARN YOU, SIR-- I'VE SWORN OFF MAKING WEAPONS.

AND THAT'S A DAMN SHAME.

I KNOW ALL ABOUT YOUR HIPPIE TURN, STARK. YOU CAN STOW THAT GUM BUMPING.

MY TASK IS PURELY *DEFENSE.*

I'M ASKING FOR YOUR HELP BECAUSE WE HAVE A PIECE OF TECHNOLOGY IN THE WIND...

...AND I KNOW YOU'RE THE KIND OF MAN WHO CAN RELATE TO SEEING YOUR TECHNOLOGY IN THE HANDS OF YOUR ENEMIES.

I KNOW I CAN TRUST YOU BECAUSE OF HOW HELPFUL YOU'VE BEEN ON PROJECT DEADBOLT--

"--AND OUR MAGNETO PROTOCOLS."
Some of my early adventures are probably still classified, but it's public knowledge that I...consulted on how to deal with extinction-level events--
--and threats that represented technological leaps beyond our current capabilities.
I've always been an *idea guy.*
YOU HUMANS NEVER LEARN.
"WHEN AN ENEMY CAN SIMPLY NULLIFY EVERY ADVANTAGE ON THE BATTLEFIELD, THE U.S. MILITARY SITS UP AND TAKES NOTICE.
"THE COUNTERMEASURES AGAINST MAGNETO ARE ALREADY BEING INSTALLED IN OUR MOST SENSITIVE LOCATIONS...
"...AND PLACED INTO AIR FORCE ONE."

WHAT CAN I SAY? WHEN YOUR BODYGUARD FLIES AROUND IN A METAL SUIT ALL DAY, YOU TEND TO THINK A LOT ABOUT A GUY WHO CAN CRUSH IT LIKE A SODA CAN.

SOMEDAY, I'LL HOPEFULLY BE ABLE TO SHRINK THE ANTI-MAGNETO TECH DOWN ENOUGH TO PUT IT INTO MY IRON MAN TECHNOLOGY.

SO, IS THIS THE *REAL* McCOY OR--?

IT'S AN EXACT DUPLICATE OF THE ONE THAT MAGNETO WEARS. IF IT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR HIM, IT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR US.

IT BLOCKS TELEPATHIC SIGNALS.

FRANKLY, WE'RE OUTGUNNED IN THAT DEPARTMENT, AND UNFORTUNATELY, IT SEEMS TO BE THE MUTIE FASTBALL.

THE PROBLEM IS--

HOW TO *MINIATURIZE* IT.

WE TOOK A BIG STEP IN THAT DIRECTION SIX MONTHS AGO. WE MANAGED TO GET THE PSI-BLOCKER TO BE NO MORE NOTICEABLE THAN A *HEARING AID.*

THE GOAL IS TO MAKE IT COMPLETELY UNNOTICEABLE BY MAKING IT SMALL ENOUGH TO IMPLANT UNDER YOUR SCALP.

SO WHAT'S THE PROBLEM? WHY DO YOU NEED ME?
THE ONLY PROTOTYPES WERE NEARLY STOLEN YESTERDAY BY SOMEONE WITH A GENUINE-ISSUE SECURITY CLEARANCE AND CREDENTIALS FROM *YOUR* COMPANY.
A SPY WITH A *REAL* SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER, BACKSTORY AND EVEN WITNESSES.
AS FAR AS WE KNOW, SHE DIDN'T EXIST UNTIL TEN WEEKS AGO.
LIKELY A MUTANT TELEPATH. MY OPERATION IS COMPROMISED, AND I KNEW YOUR FATHER BACK IN THE DAY.
RIGHT NOW, I NEED YOU AND THE ARMORED AVENGER-- YOU'RE THE ONLY ONES I TRUST--
--TO GET THIS SECRET TECHNOLOGY TO *NICK FURY.*

I was back in a place where I was least comfortable--the overlaps of my company and the Department of Defense.
But the mole embedded themself into Stark Enterprises and used us as the skeleton key.
The general didn't suspect me or my company, but...I did.
Industrial espionage is part of the game, but this was a new achievement. Social engineering of a cover that could be molded during an ongoing covert operation.
I'd never seen the woman before, but then I realized maybe I wouldn't have known if I had met her.
The cover was a scientist named **Hazel Kendal.**
STARK ENTERPRISES
KENDAL, HAZEL
A true self-made woman who had impeccable references and a stack of personal recommendations.
If this thief really is a mutant telepath, then a part of me wanted to reach out to Charles Xavier, or maybe Beast would've been a good first stop, but I promised Dinger I'd meet Colonel Fury...

...so I put the pedal down to New York City.

I was returning at a time when I was finally nostalgic for it.

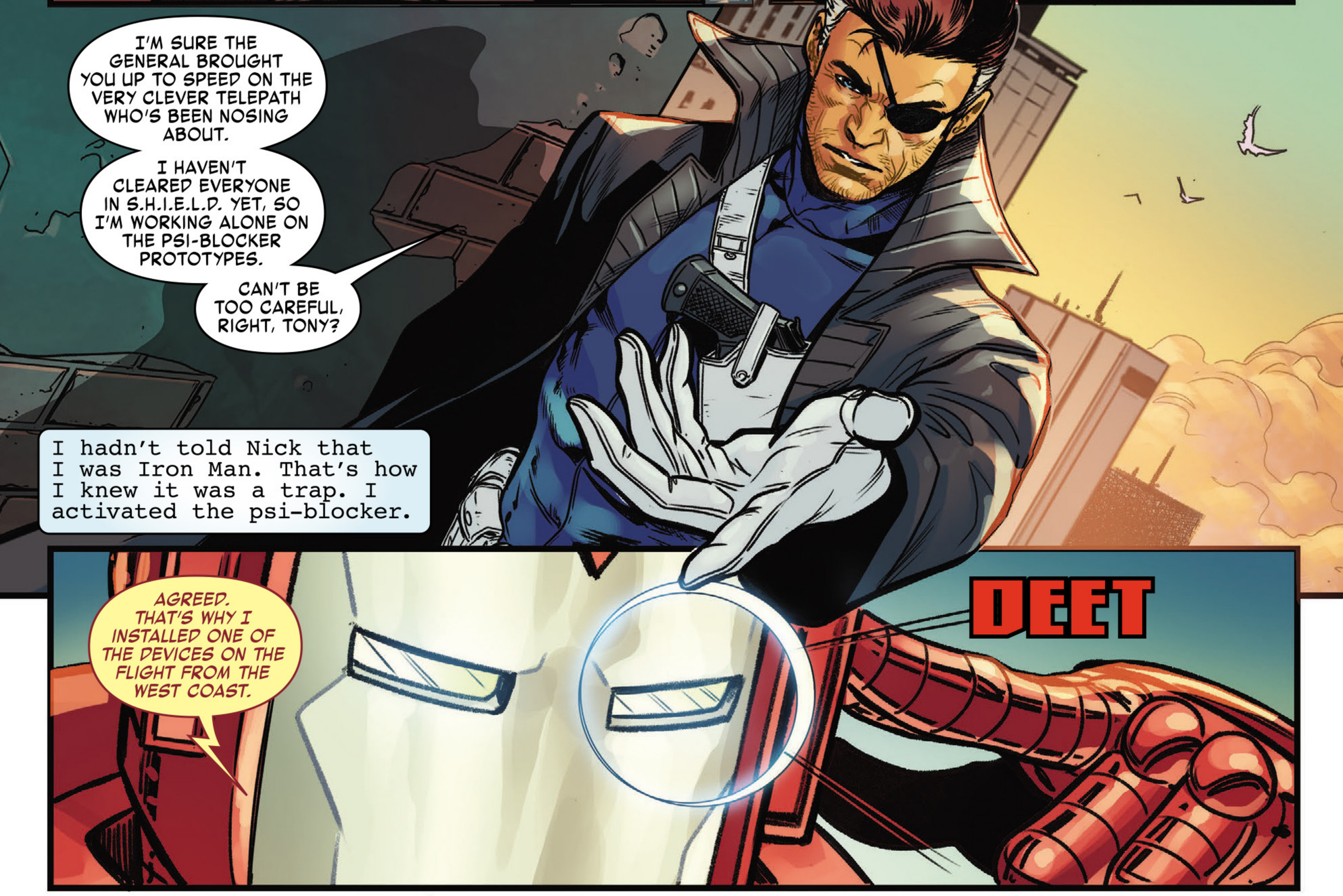
Had a lot of good times here and a lot of bad. But it was home.

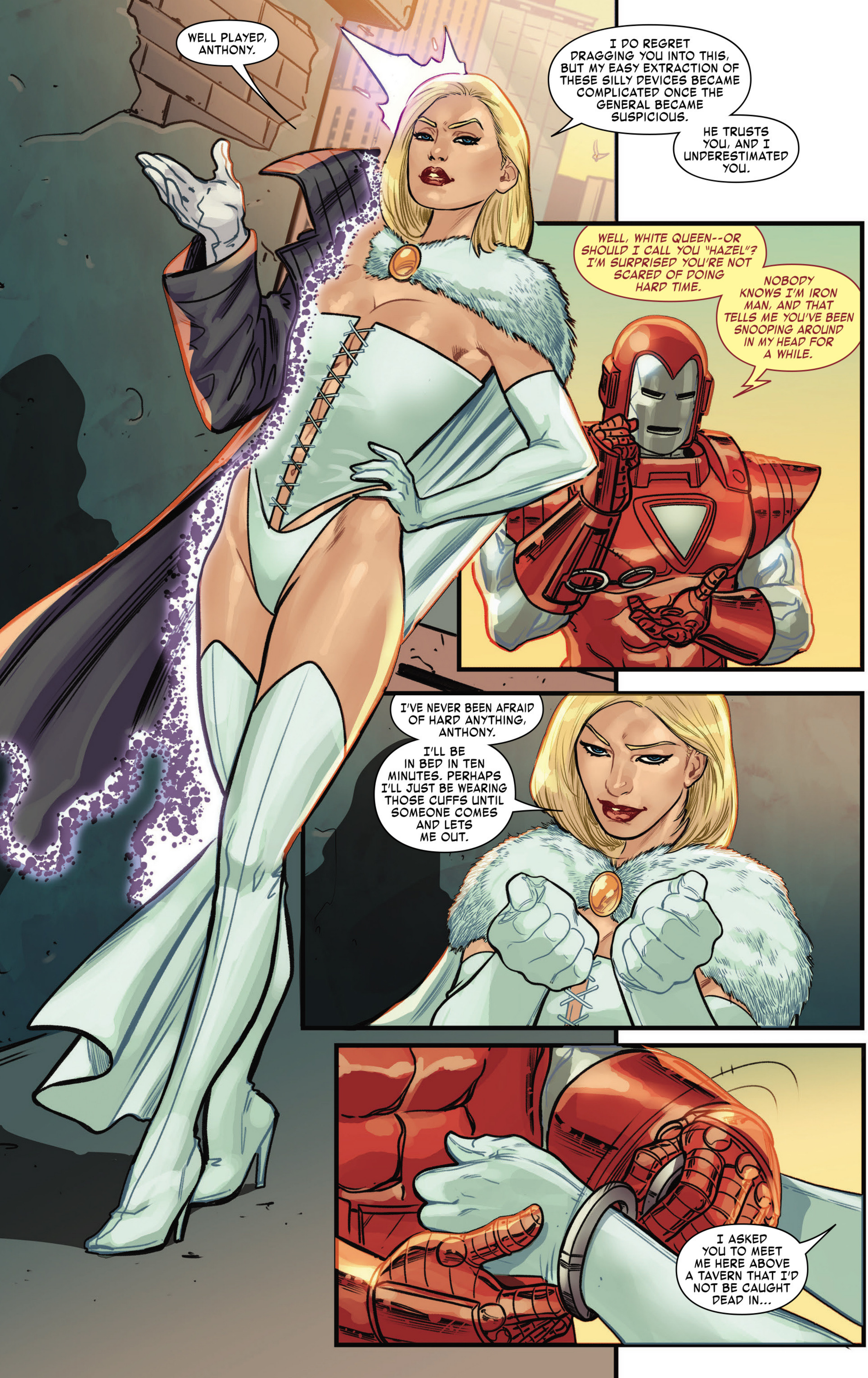
The first hint that something wasn't quite right was that I wasn't landing on the S.H.I.E.L.D. Helicarrier patrolling the skies...

...but in a shady part of Hell's Kitchen. Still, it's not the most sketchy place Fury had ever asked to meet.

GOOD TO SEE YOU, SHELLHEAD.
APPRECIATE YOUR LUGGAGE SERVICE.

ANY REASON WE'RE NOT MEETING UP ON YOUR HELICARRIER?


I'M SURE THE GENERAL BROUGHT YOU UP TO SPEED ON THE VERY CLEVER TELEPATH WHO'S BEEN NOSING ABOUT.
I HAVEN'T CLEARED EVERYONE IN S.H.I.E.L.D. YET, SO I'M WORKING ALONE ON THE PSI-BLOCKER PROTOTYPES.
CAN'T BE TOO CAREFUL, RIGHT, TONY?
I hadn't told Nick that I was Iron Man. That's how I knew it was a trap. I activated the psi-blocker.
AGREED. THAT'S WHY I INSTALLED ONE OF THE DEVICES ON THE FLIGHT FROM THE WEST COAST.
DEET


WELL PLAYED, ANTHONY.
I DO REGRET DRAGGING YOU INTO THIS, BUT MY EASY EXTRACTION OF THESE SILLY DEVICES BECAME COMPLICATED ONCE THE GENERAL BECAME SUSPICIOUS.
HE TRUSTS YOU, AND I UNDERESTIMATED YOU.
WELL, WHITE QUEEN--OR SHOULD I CALL YOU "HAZEL"? I'M SURPRISED YOU'RE NOT SCARED OF DOING HARD TIME.
NOBODY KNOWS I'M IRON MAN, AND THAT TELLS ME YOU'VE BEEN SNOOPING AROUND IN MY HEAD FOR A WHILE.
I'VE NEVER BEEN AFRAID OF HARD ANYTHING, ANTHONY.
I'LL BE IN BED IN TEN MINUTES. PERHAPS I'LL JUST BE WEARING THOSE CUFFS UNTIL SOMEONE COMES AND LETS ME OUT.
I ASKED YOU TO MEET ME HERE ABOVE A TAVERN THAT I'D NOT BE CAUGHT DEAD IN...

...“THE BAR WITH NO NAME.” IT'S FILLED--

--WITH THE KIND OF LOUTS WHO ARE EASILY DOMINATED BY A TELEPATH OF MY SKILL.

UGHN!

TRAAD

YOU'RE MAKING THIS WORSE ON YOURSELF.

CIAO, DARLING. THANK YOU AGAIN FOR THE CONCIERGE LUGGAGE SERVICE.

WHAM!

I've fought them all. I've got a whole chapter in my book about the Hulk, but trust me and my ribs...

BADOM!

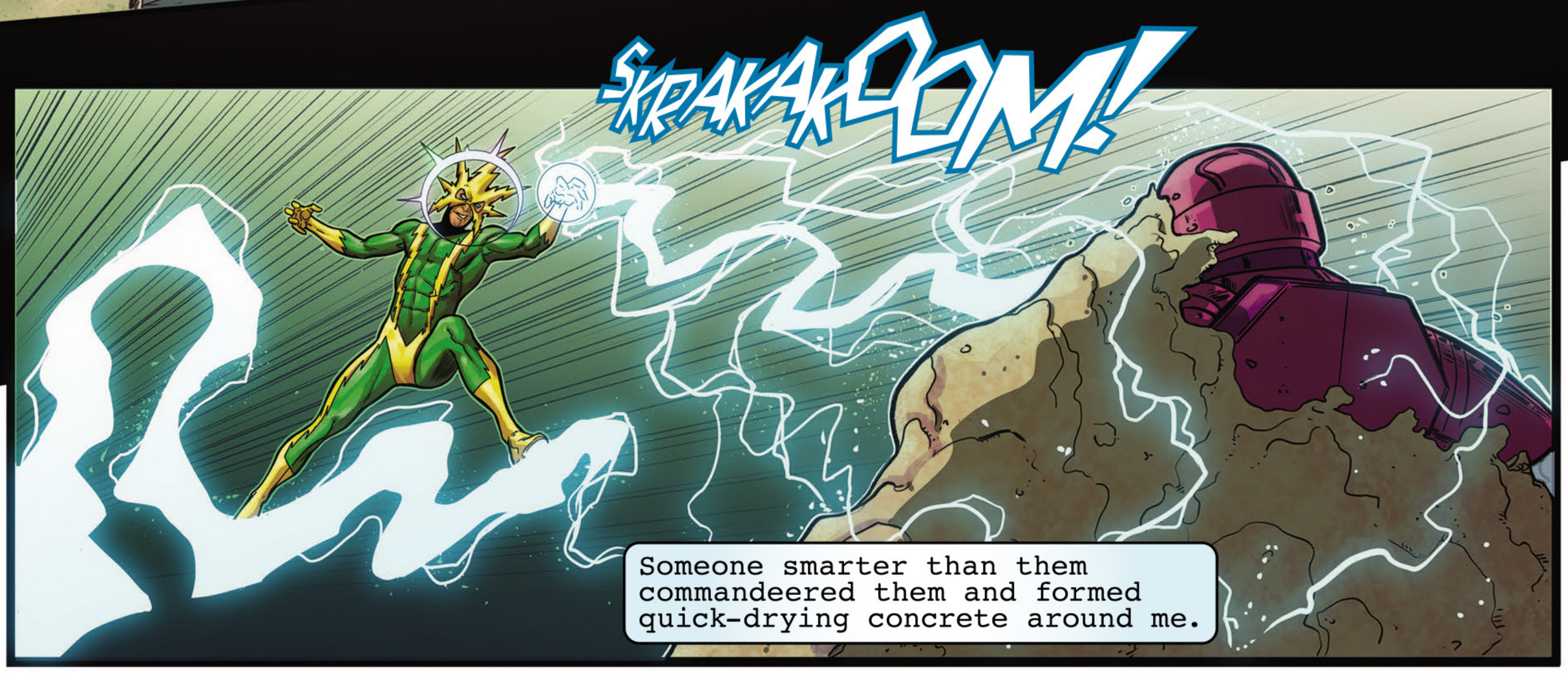
...I'm glad I only fought **the Rhino** once.
AARGH!
LEAVE EMMA ALONE, CREEP!
You only have to run into the Rhino once to rethink your low opinion of Spider-Man.
I'M NOT PLAYING, FROST.
IF ONE OF THESE GUYS GETS HURT DURING THIS, IT'S ON YOU.

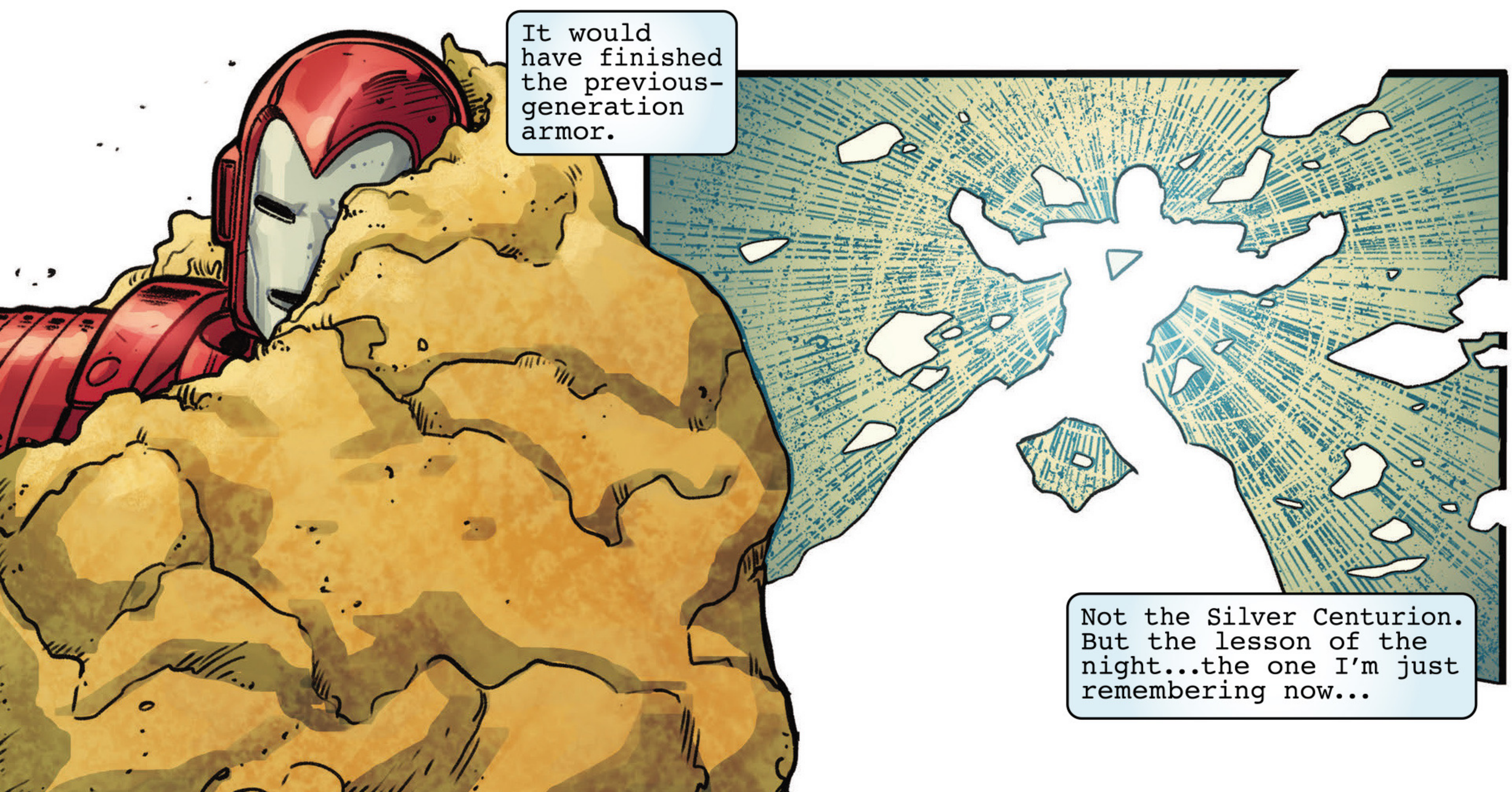
KRRAK!
ANTHONY, DARLING. CAN'T YOU UNDERSTAND WHEN YOU'VE BEEN BESTED?
RHINO, YOU OKAY?
CHOK!
CAREFUL WITH TURK, TONY. HE'S JUST A MUGGER. I FEEL LIKE YOU'VE GOT ENOUGH BLOOD ON YOUR HANDS, RIGHT?
LOW BLOW. I HAVEN'T BEEN THIS ANNOYED IN A LONG TIME, FROST.
BWEEM!
PAF!
COFF
UGH...

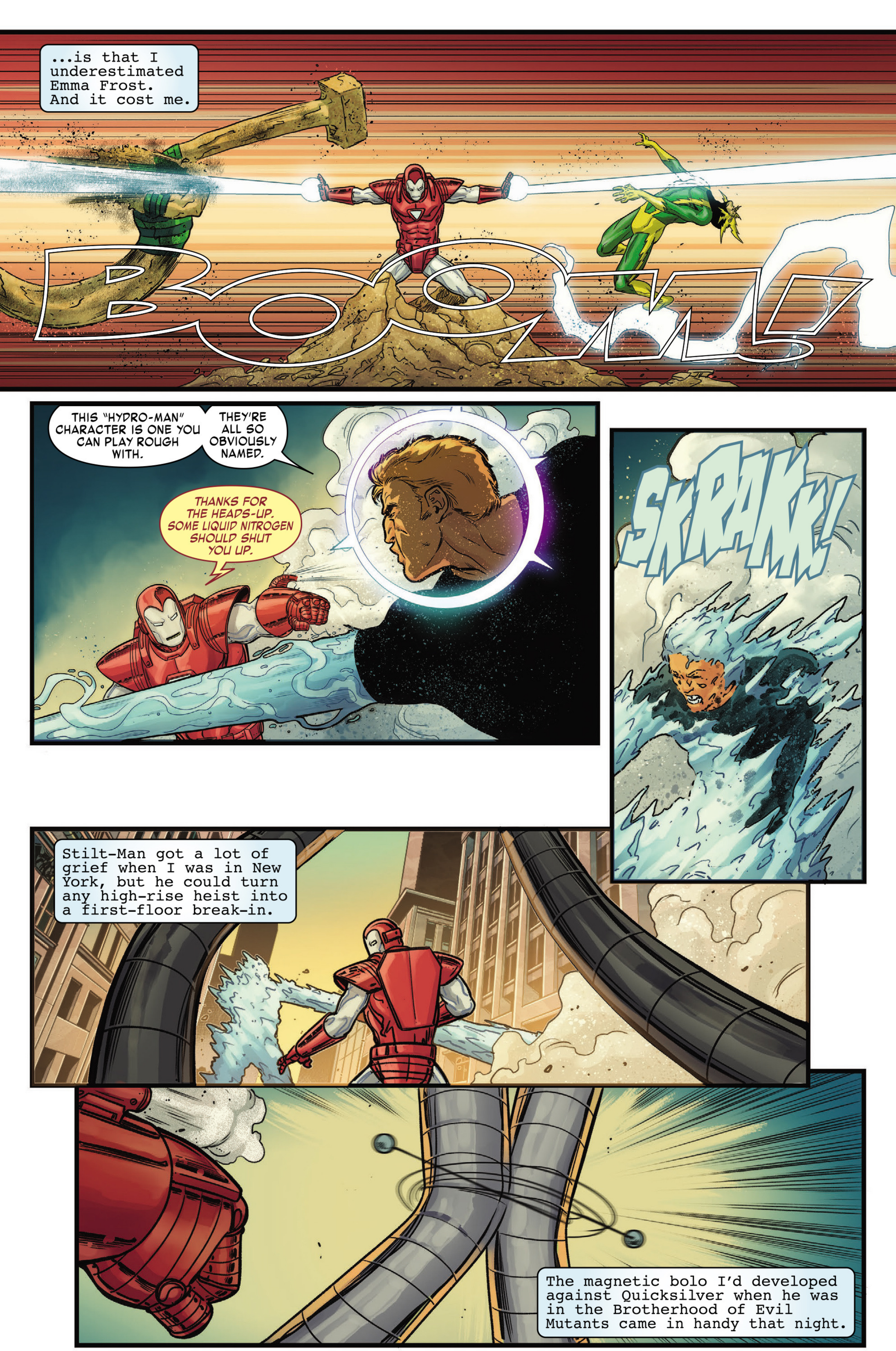
Part of Alcoholics Anonymous is not diagnosing someone else's disease. That said, I wished I'd met Spider-Man's fan club at a meeting.

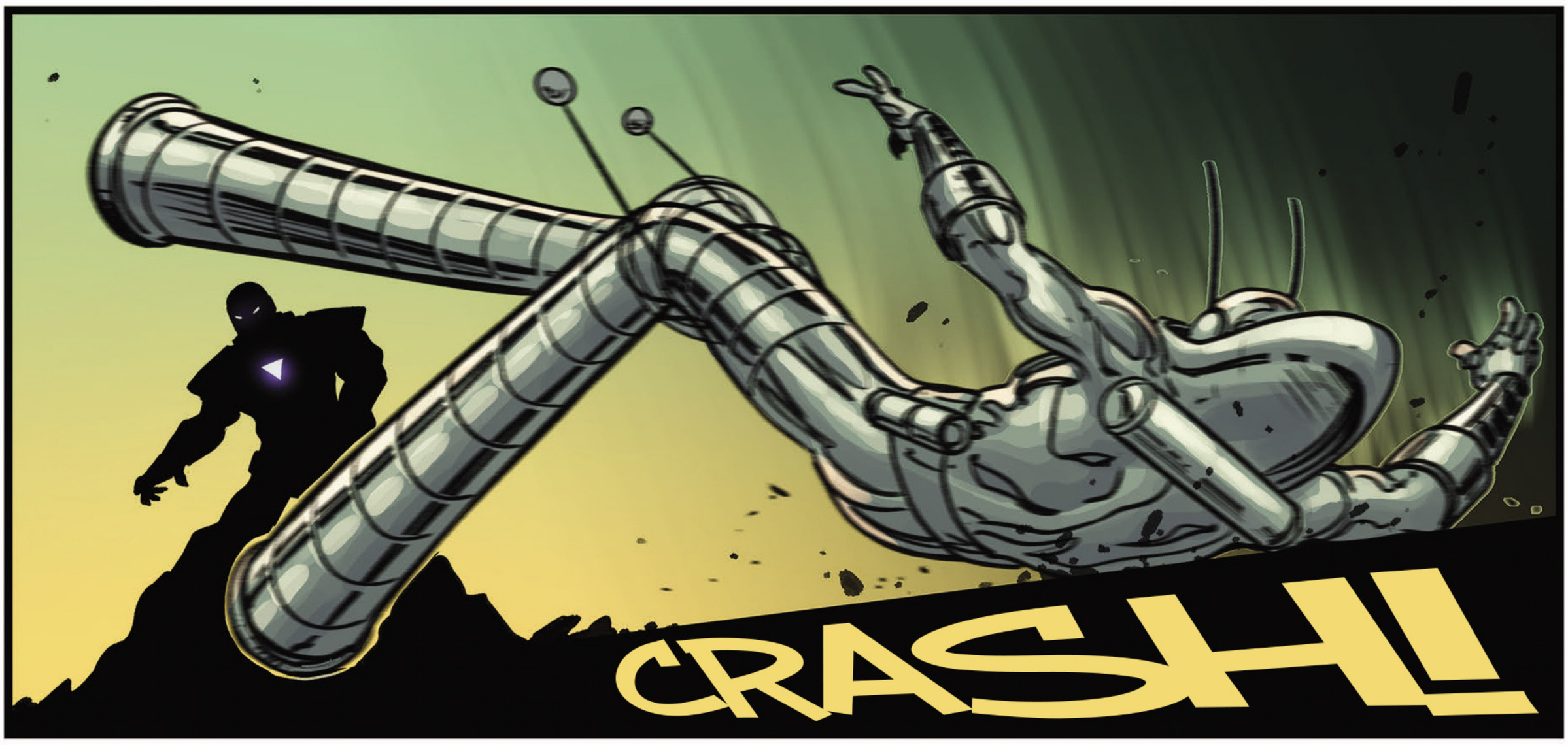
I leaped out of bed to make sure I jotted down every detail about getting beaten up by a kid's rogues' gallery.

But that's not really what happened, right?



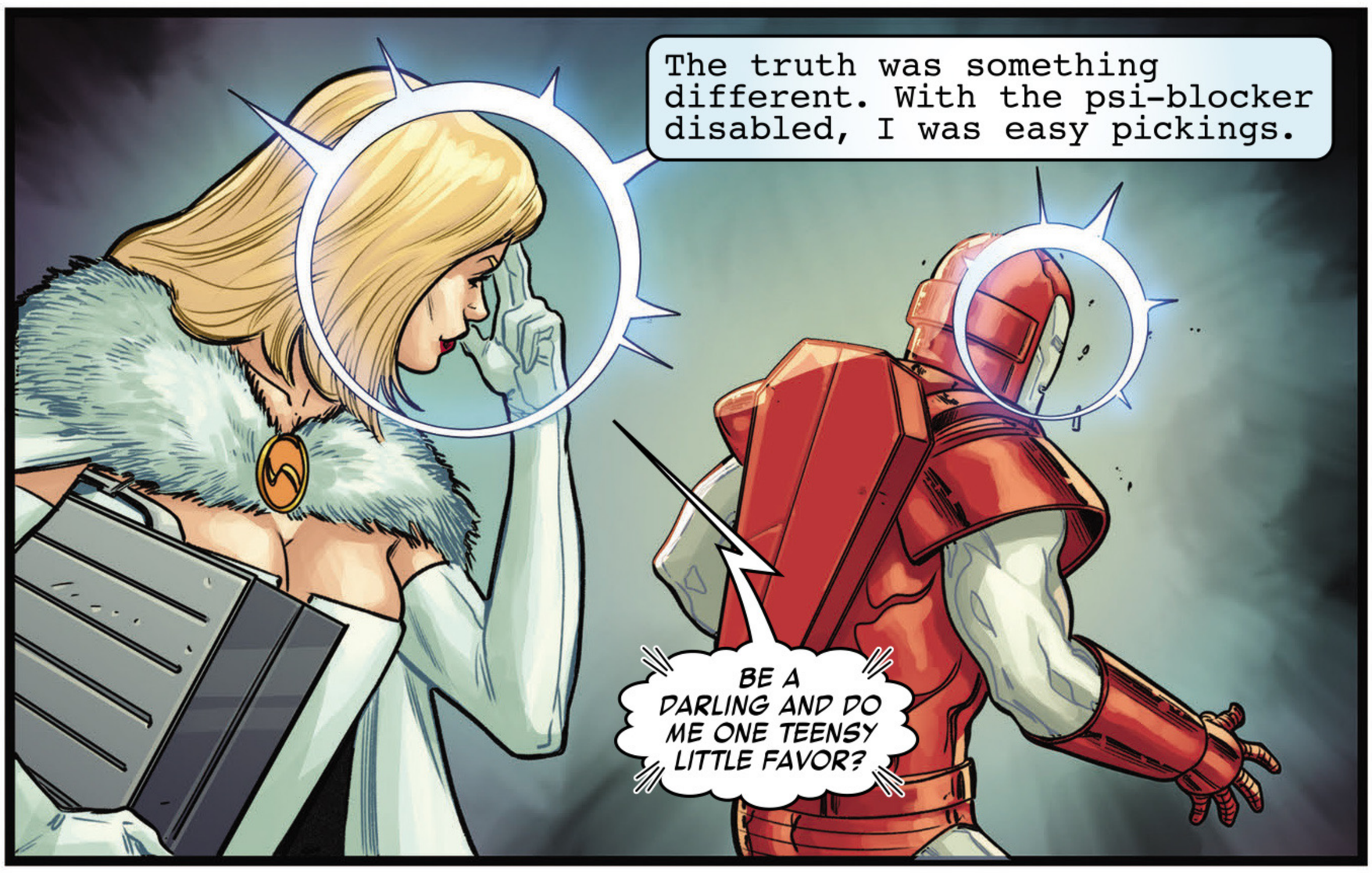



...is that I underestimated Emma Frost. And it cost me.
BOOM
THIS "HYDRO-MAN" CHARACTER IS ONE YOU CAN PLAY ROUGH WITH.
THEY'RE ALL SO OBVIOUSLY NAMED.
THANKS FOR THE HEADS-UP. SOME LIQUID NITROGEN SHOULD SHUT YOU UP.
SKRAKK!
Stilt-Man got a lot of grief when I was in New York, but he could turn any high-rise heist into a first-floor break-in.
The magnetic bolo I'd developed against Quicksilver when he was in the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants came in handy that night.


CRASH!

I was still trapped when Doc Ock attacked again.

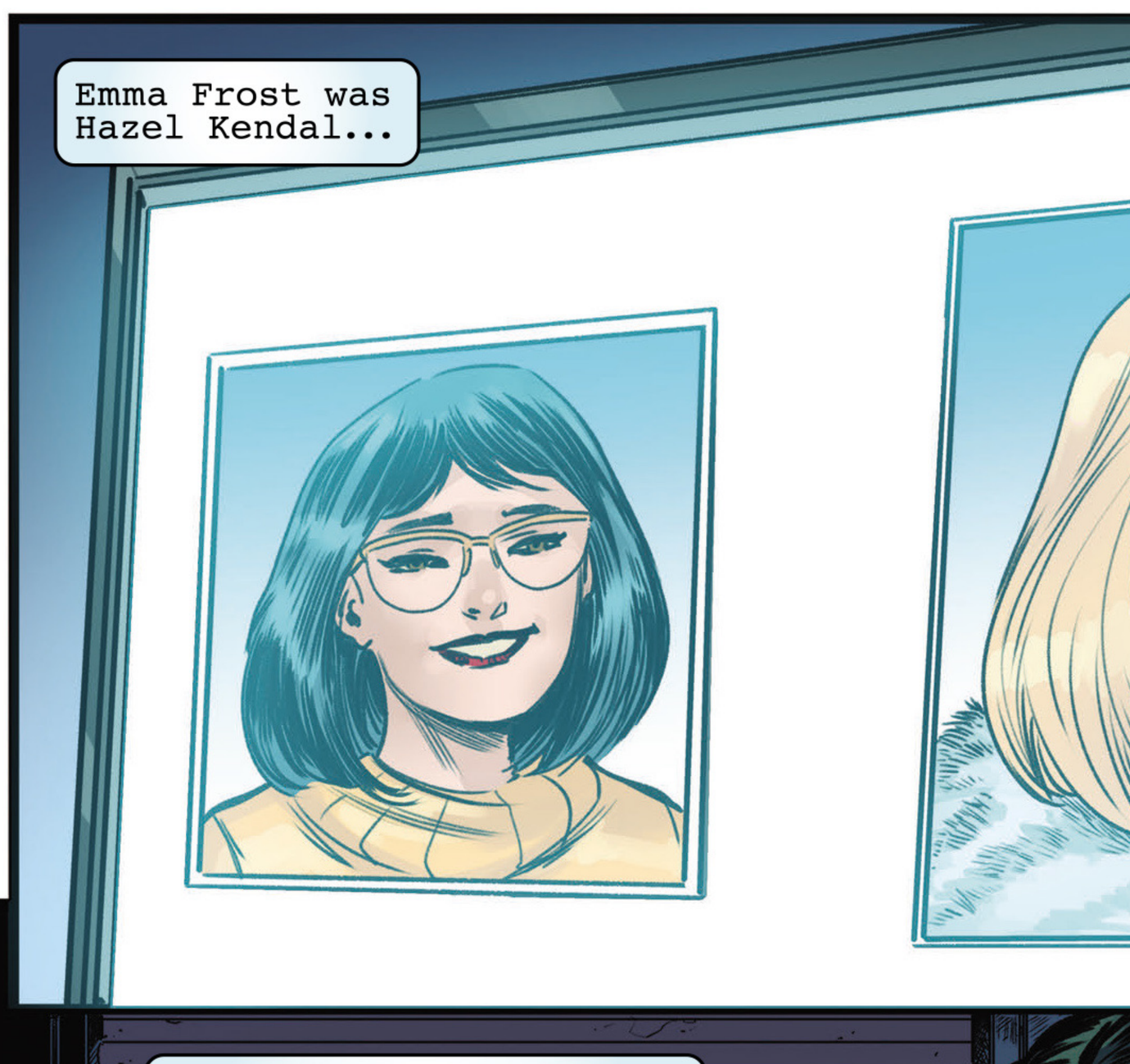
You don't ever remember hits like the one I took. You remember the aftermath. I had a concussion. And that's what I thought the story was.

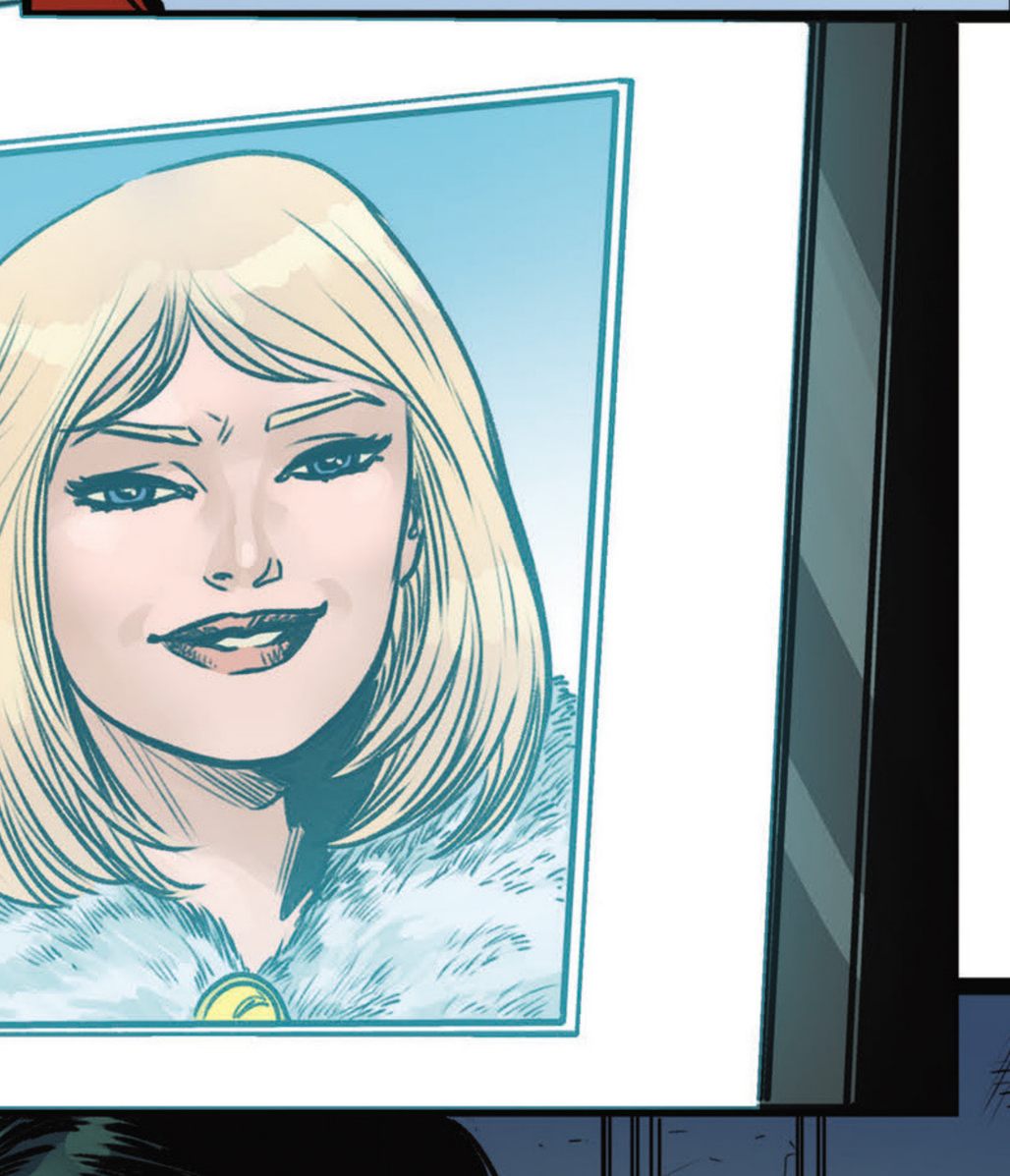

The truth was something different. With the psi-blocker disabled, I was easy pickings.
BE A DARLING AND DO ME ONE TEENSY LITTLE FAVOR?

FORGET HAZEL KENDAL AND EMMA FROST THIS EVENING.
IT COULD HAVE BEEN ANY OF THE CRIMINALS IN NEW YORK WHO TOOK THIS CASE.

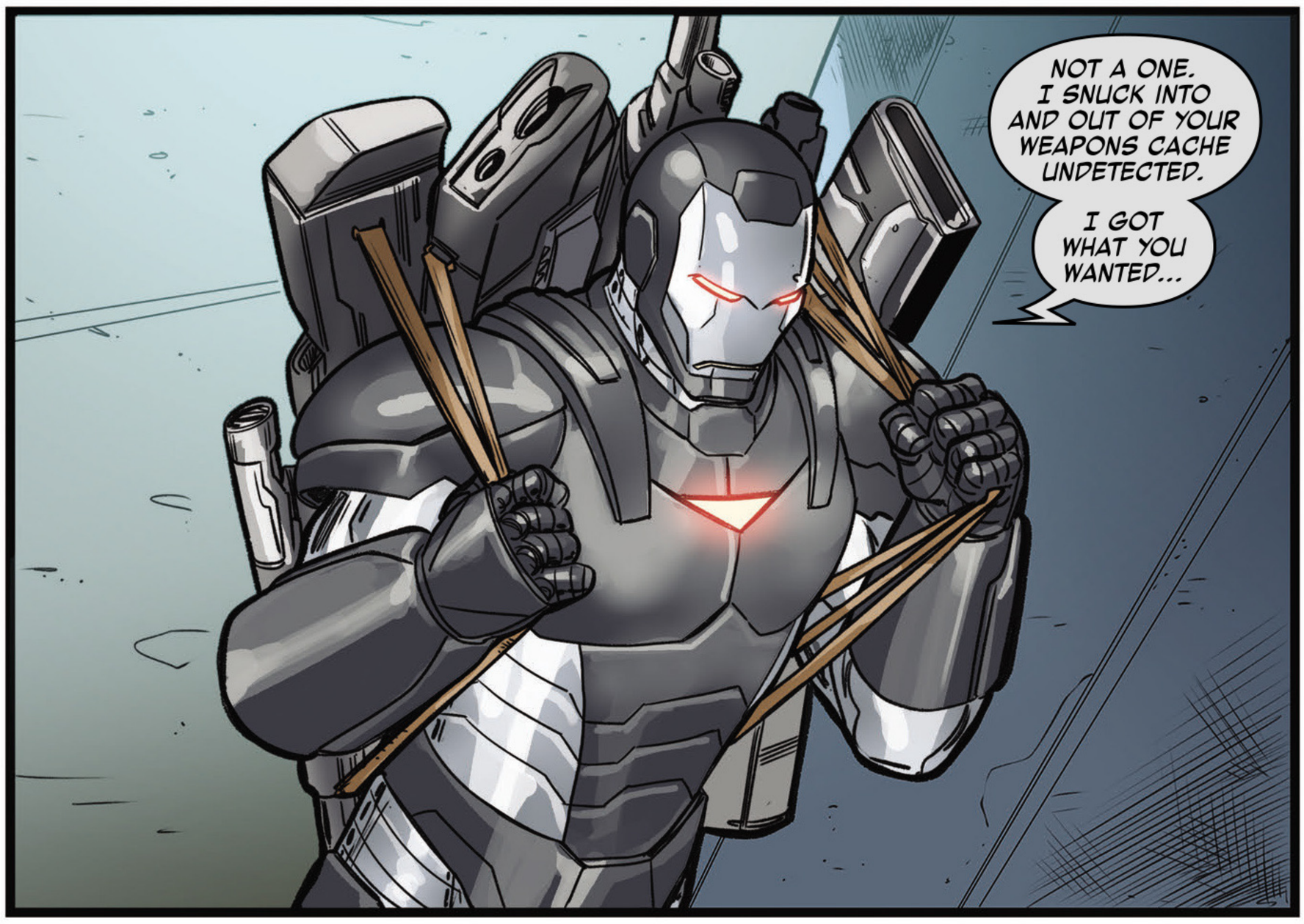
#$%&, THIS IS GONNA BE A REALLY GOOD BOOK.

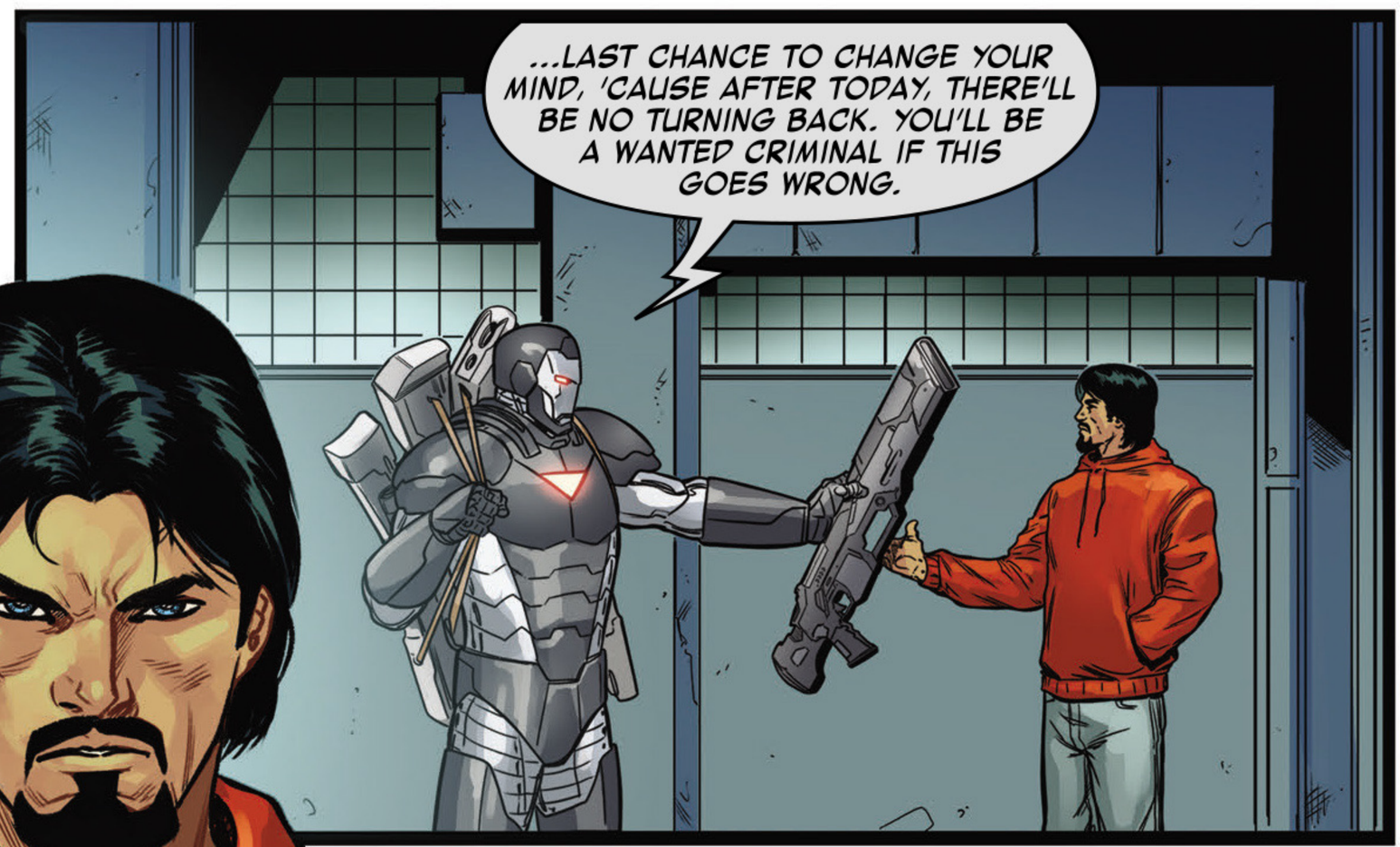
The concussion covered for the whammy she put on me.


Emma Frost was Hazel Kendal...



The words are flowing, and I feel like I could write for hours more, but Frost was the past.
I have more pressing concerns now that Feilong and Orchis have control of my technology.

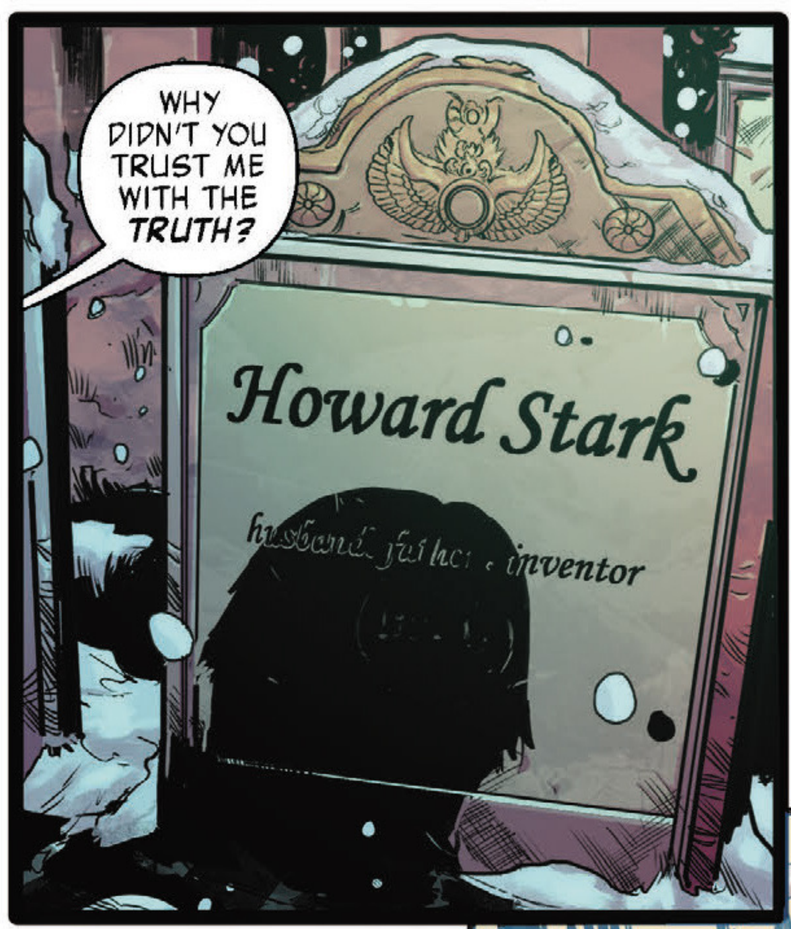




NEXT:
IRON MAN vs. STARK UNLIMITED

THINGS TO COME...
"SOMEONE IS TRYING TO KILL TONY STARK..."

...AND DESPITE EVERYTHING BAD THAT'S TRANSPIRED RECENTLY, THIS MAN DESERVES THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT BECAUSE OF HIS HEROIC PAST.

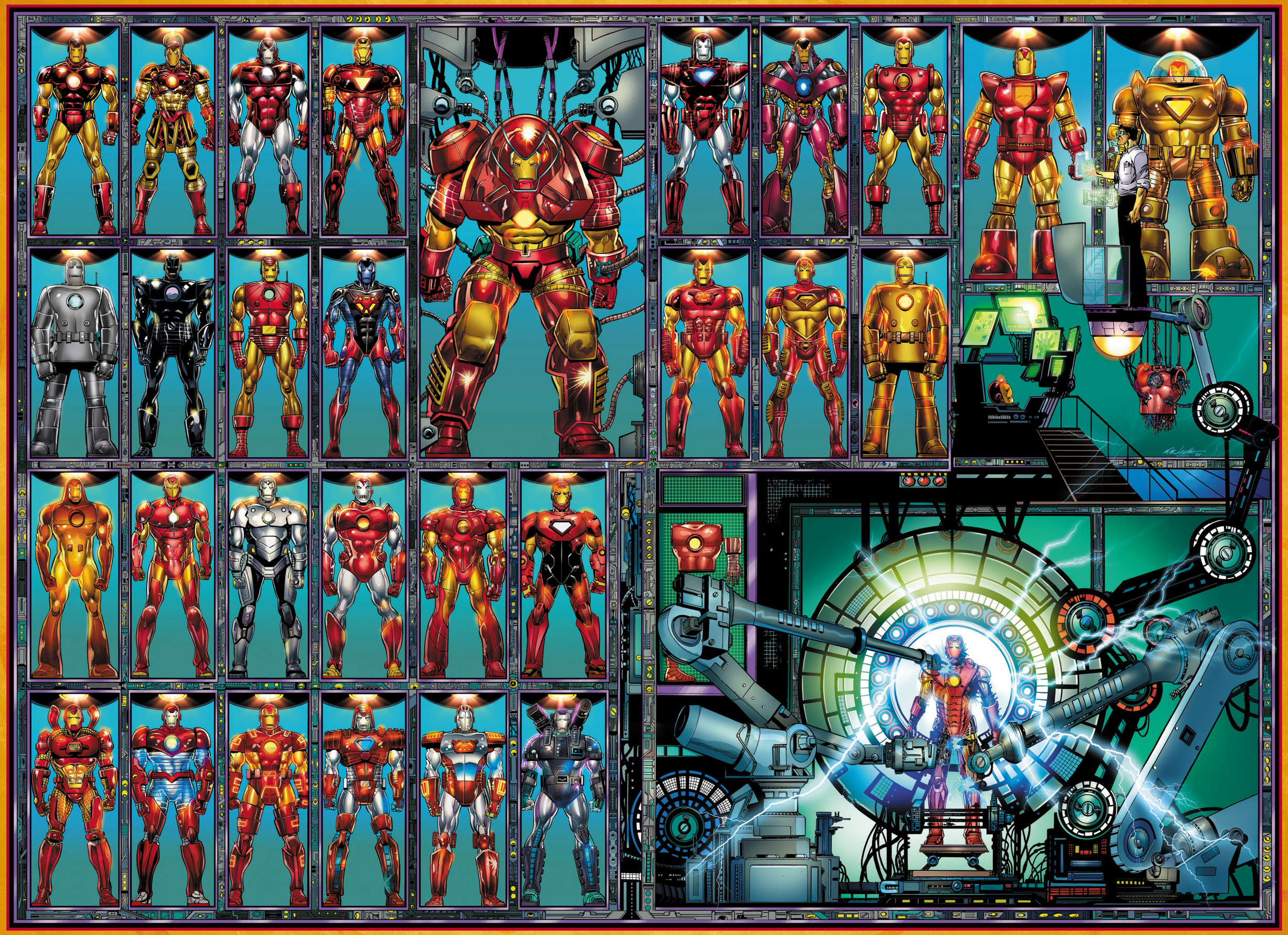

WHY DIDN'T YOU TRUST ME WITH THE TRUTH?
Howard Stark
inventor

"IT'S ALL GONE TO HELL, HOWARD.
STARK UNLIMITED
MURDERER

"THE MISTAKES OF THE PAST ARE DRAWING FRESH BLOOD TODAY...

"...AND I HAVE NEW ENEMIES."
WHO AVENGES YOUR VICTIMS, MR. STARK?

THE DEADLY GAME BEGINS THIS DECEMBER IN...
THE INVINCIBLE
IRON MAN #1



BOB LAYTON & PAUL MOUNTS
#1-6 CONNECTING VARIANTS

JOHN ROMITA JR. & FRANK D'ARMATA
#1 HIDDEN GEM VARIANT

DECLAN SHALVEY
#1 X-TREME MARVEL VARIANT

PEPE LARRAZ & MARTE GRACIA
#1 VARIANT

IVAN TAO
#1 IRONHEART VARIANT

MARCO CHECCHETTO & MARCIO MENYZ
#1 VARIANT

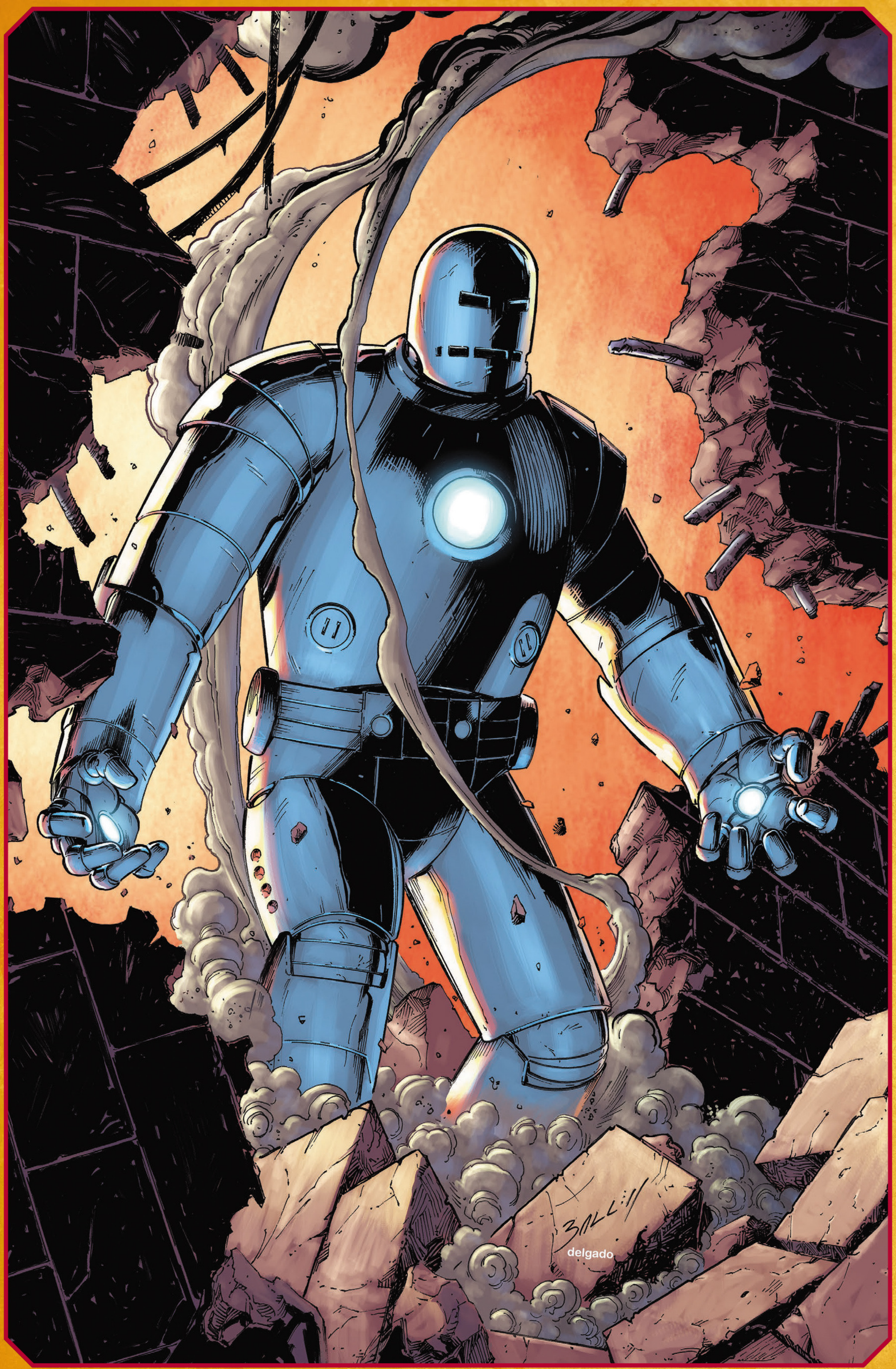
LUCIANO VECCHIO
#1 VARIANT

PEACH MOMOKO
#2 VARIANT

ESAD RIBIĆ
#2 CLASSIC HOMAGE VARIANT

DAVID NAKAYAMA
#2 DEMONIZED VARIANT

CHRIS ALLEN & DAVID CURIEL
#2 STORMBREAKERS VARIANT



MARK BAGLEY & EDGAR DELGADO

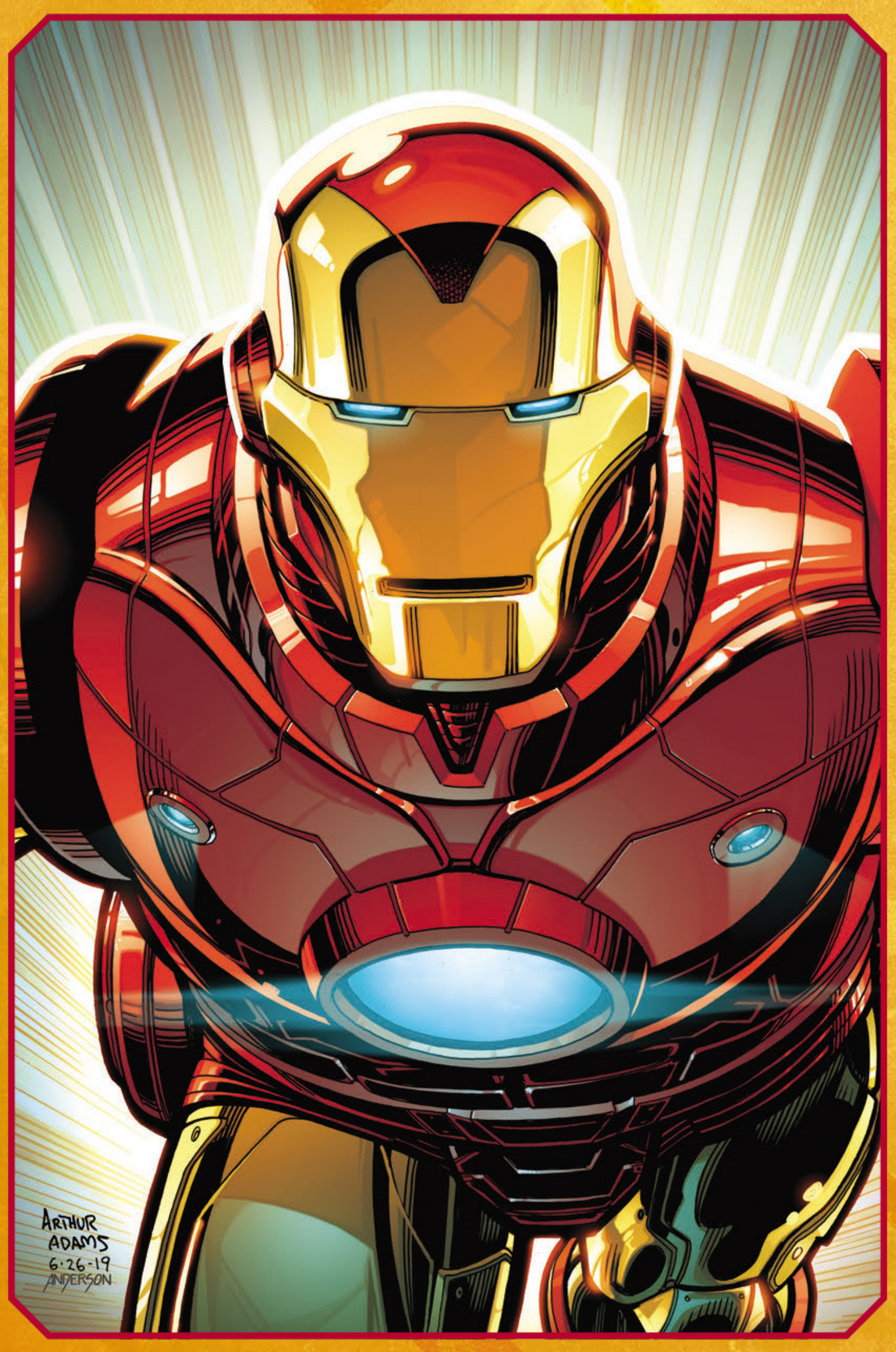
#3 VARIANT

JONAH LOBE

#3 MARVEL ANATOMY VARIANT

ALEX ROSS
#4 TIMELESS VARIANT

ALEX ROSS
#4 TIMELESS SKETCH VARIANT



ARTHUR ADAMS & BRAD ANDERSON
#4 VARIANT

IBAN COELLO & JESUS ABURTOV
#4 VARIANT

PHIL NOTO
#5 VARIANT

FEDERICO VICENTINI & EDGAR DELGADO
#5 STORMBREAKERS VARIANT

ARIO ANINDITO & FRANK WILLIAM
#6 SPIDER-VERSE VARIANT

STEPHEN SEGOVIA & DAVID CURIEL
#6 VARIANT

ROSE BESCH
#6 VARIANT

"Invincible Iron Man *pays homage to the past while building up a mystery worth investing in.*"
— AIPT

TONY STARK HAS LOST IT ALL.

HIS COMPANY, HIS MONEY — MAYBE EVEN HIS SOBRIETY.

BUT STARK DOESN'T REALIZE he still has so much more to lose, especially when the assassins start to come for him! As a familiar foe returns to destroy him once and for all, at least Ironheart is in Tony's corner. But what secret is Riri Williams harboring, and will it change their relationship forever? Soon, another close friend is found dead — and it looks like Tony is the killer. Who is the real murderer? Why are they trying to frame Iron Man? And exactly how far will they go to strike at everything he holds dear? All this, plus Emma Frost! A new armor for War Machine! And the untold story of...Iron Man vs. the West Coast Avengers?!

COLLECTING ***INVINCIBLE IRON MAN (2022) #1-6***
— BY GERRY DUGGAN, JUAN FRIGERI,
ANDREA DI VITO AND BRYAN VALENZA.

T+ MARVEL